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ABSTRACT

Nine papers from a British conference on applied linguistics are compiled in this report. Introductory comments point out the traditional primacy of spoken language while acknowledging the demand for literacy and the importance of the written mode. Papers and authors are as follows: "An Educational Theory of (Written) Language" (Michael Stubbs); "Predicting Texts: Aspects of a Strategic Model of Text Comprehension" (Ulrike Hanna Meinhof); "Playing Safe with Predictions: Hedging Attribution and Conditions in Economic Forecasting" (Pindi Makaya, Thomas Bloor); "Predictive Items in Student Writing" (Teresa O'Brien); "Do Dictionaries Help Students Write?" (Hilary Nesi); "The Oral Dimensions of Literacy Events: A Letter from the DHSS" (Mike Baynham); "First and Foreign Language Composing: A Protocol-based Study" (Valerie Arndt); "Non-nativeness in Second Language Texts: The Syntax Factor" (Marie-Paule Woodley); and "The Representation of Spoken Language in Early Reading Books: Problems for L2 Learner Readers" (Catherine Wallace). References are provided with each paper. (LB)

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British Studies in Applied Linguistics 2

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WRITTEN LANGUAGE

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BRITISH STUDIES IN APPLIED LINGUISTICS 2

WRITTEN LANGUAGE

Papers from the Annual Meeting of the British Association for Applied Linguistics

held at the University of Reading
September 1986

Edited by Thomas Bloor and John Norrish

1987
Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research
for
British Association for Applied Linguistics

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INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of this century the great Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure denounced the tyranny of written language over literate societies' perceptions of language. Since then linguists have paid lip service to the primacy of spoken language though with little impact on the rest of society. Of late, however, linguistics has been joined by the world of language teaching (both mother tongue and foreign), and oracy is added to literacy in the array of educational demands. Sometimes people even argue that literacy is no longer crucial in the age of the video and the cassette recorder. Yet the demand for literacy appears to increase rather than decrease with advances in technology, and in a world where English is a lingua franca, particularly in the spheres of academic endeavour, commerce and industry, it would be rash for English speakers in particular to underestimate the importance of the written mode.

The opening paper, a fuller version of Michael Stubbs' Keynote address to the BAAL Conference, paradoxically opens by powerfully challenging the very notion of 'written language' as a meaningful linguistic category. Ostensibly, of course, the difference between written and spoken language could not be less abstract: one involves symbols which are visually apprehended; the other takes the form of disturbances in sound waves and uses a vocal-auditory channel. Yet the linguistic significance of this distinction remains a highly debatable question. In Stubbs' words, 'the distinction between written and spoken language is an extreme idealisation'. For Professor Stubbs this is only a starting point for an ambitious and insightful set of proposals for an integrated theory, or body of theories, emerging from the 'deconstruction' - a key word in Stubbs' thinking - of many terms we take to be self-evident. The paper exhibits the breadth of scope and the scholarship and, above all, the passionate social conviction for which Stubbs is noted.

Certainly there are dangers in separating off 'written language', and later in this volume Baynham shows the complex interplay of oral factors in a certain type of literacy event, demonstrating that (il)literacy is by no means an absolute nor an individual matter. On the other hand, Wallace's paper demonstrates the dangers of a naive assumption that colloquial or

non-standard spoken language can be transposed directly into written text for the early reader.

Meinhof gives a theory-based account of a practical pedagogy for approaching foreign language texts as social constructs, and Pindi and Bloor analyse one aspect of the writing of economic forecasts which could have significant implications for ESP teaching.

The remaining papers are concerned with student writing. O'Brien's is essentially a work-in-progress paper, offering an intriguing example of a serious attempt to apply a discourse model to L1 student writing difficulties; Nesi analyses the inadequacy of dictionaries as aids to L2 students' writing; Arndt compares first and second language writing strategies and perceives a strong relation between the two within given individuals; Woodley examines the syntax of writing in L1 and L2 (English and French) and suggests that the linguistic choices made lead to functionally different texts with significant rhetorical differences.

If our volume displays some of the eclecticism that presented Stubbs the reviewer with problems (see page 3), we would argue that all the papers here merit an audience in their own right, and that there is a coherence here which transcends that of 'valid linguistic category'. What they all have in common is a concern for language not as form alone but as dynamic form functioning in a social context. And all are rooted in the immediate experience of first and second language users.

Thomas Bloor, University of Aston

John Norrish, University of London Institute of Education

AN EDUCATIONAL THEORY OF (WRITTEN) LANGUAGE

Michael Stubbs
University of London Institute of Education

> 'A theory should generate the criteria for its evaluation, the contexts necessary for its explorations, the principles for their description and the rules for interpretation.' (Bernstein, in press)

The title of this paper is misleading in three respects, but a more accurate title would be excessively awkward or uninterpretable. First, it does not imply that I have an educational theory of written language to offer: but that I intend to discuss **the form that a properly constituted theory should take** in an area of applied linguistics. Second, for reasons that I will discuss in detail, the notion of written language is **not a genuine linguistic category**; so this phrase is in the title (in brackets) only in deference to the title of the conference. Third, I do not really intend to discuss a theory of written language, but what a **research programme** might look like and how we might judge rational progress in such a programme (Lakatos 1970). The real title of the paper is therefore 'Towards the proper form of a progressive research programme in applied linguistics' - but that would have been excessively awkward. A snappier title would have been 'From morphology to marxism' - but that would have been uninterpretable.

The starting point of this paper is very simple. I recently had to review three edited collections of articles on reading, writing and literacy (Stubbs, 1987, in press, a) and had great difficulty in making overall sense of them. I think this was due to the editors' lack of attempts at any synthesis or interpretation of masses of apparently only distantly related facts and theories. These three books contained inter alia articles on: the spread of printing in fifteenth century Europe; phoneme-grapheme correspondences in English, French and Dutch; developments in the syntax of Inuktitut since its use in writing. Some articles were about children, others were about adults; some were about L1, others about L2; some recommended action research, others were experimental; some

were corpus-based, others purely conceptual; some were socio-historical, others psychological. They discussed data from several different education systems and from several different languages.

The editors of one collection say despairingly that the volume of research is 'awe inspiring' and that it is 'beyond the capacity of the editors to summarise or synthesise, or indeed even read' all the relevant studies. This may be true, but misses the main point that what is required is not just summaries, but some **conceptual framework** which could allow us to think coherently about such a volume of disparate work. The editors were not oriented to deep enough levels of interpretation and meaning. One very simple problem is the very wide range of different types of information and theory which require to be integrated. Collections of work on written language (eg Olson et al eds 1985) contain articles which go literally from phoneme-grapheme correspondences to whole societies; from phonetics to politics and from morphology to marxism. It is evident that research over this range must be a collaborative enterprise, involving linguists and educationalists, theoreticians and practitioners. But for genuinely progressive research, something more precise is required than a 'variety' of approaches, and loose notions of 'interdisciplinary research' (Olson et al eds 1985:4). More generally, programmes of applied linguistics conferences tend to have a rather random appearance (Crystal 1981:22), even if organised loosely round a theme such as 'Written Language'. One certainly could not work out from such programmes what applied linguistics **is**.

What is needed is not so much more research, but closer study of what is already known: some way of establishing criteria of importance in the mountain of inaccessible - and if inaccessible then useless - research. The continuous accumulation of printed material is, of course, itself a product of written language. In any case, knowledge does not grow from the mere accumulation of truths. The direction of progress in a science is determined by human creative imagination, not by the universe of 'facts'. And a **well planned** building of pigeon holes must proceed faster than the recording of facts to put in them (Lakatos 1970:187-88). Knowledge consists of organised structures of facts and theories.

In this paper I am going to propose an organising framework: what I will refer to as **the constituents of an educational theory of**

language.[1] With specific reference to the theme of the BAAL conference I will discuss what **an educational research programme on written language** might look like.

Before I try to set out this organising framework in detail, I will make two sets of points which I regard as axiomatic. First, **the distinction between written and spoken language is an extreme idealisation**. This is clearly demonstrated in a large body of work by Brazil, G Brown, Chafe, Givón, Nystrand, Ochs, Perera, Rubin, Tannen. (See also Hudson 1984.) These two polarised terms refer to clusters of characteristics which typically occur together, but which are logically independent. Thus written language is typically standard, formal, planned, edited, public and face to face. Whereas spoken is typically casual, spontaneous, private and interactive. (See figure 1.) But these clusters of features are not logically necessary: on the contrary, they are socio-cultural constructs which reflect beliefs about the functions of written language. In any case, the speech-writing relation is not historically stable. For example, mass literacy has affected our view of the relation; literacy encourages a particular kind of consciousness of language, and affects our view of spoken language along with our prescriptive notions of correctness. Speech-writing relations are historically specific and have been altered by radio, television and film, and more recently by access to computer based word processing and printing technology (Williams 1984:6). And forms of community publishing challenge mainstream views of the relations between written, standard and published language (see section 8). (Brice Heath 1983 and Street 1985 provide ethnographic analyses of alternative cultural views of speech-writing relations.)

If I had the space, I would try to place this set of dichotomies within a wider set of ideological oppositions. The pairs speech/writing and public/private are related to other oppositions such as nature/technology, arts/science, emotion/reason, and female/male.

The title of the BAAL conference, 'Written Language', is therefore just a rough label and not a genuine theoretical category. The speech-writing opposition hides interesting questions and requires to be deconstructed. I take deconstruction to be a critical practice: a series of methods for displaying the cultural assumptions which underlie such binary

oppositions. 'Written language' is just a folk term which has been taken over uncritically into education and linguistics. A genuinely educational theory has to see speaking and writing within the educational assumptions and ideologies held by society.

Figure 1: Typical configuration of features in spoken and written language, socioculturally expected but not logically necessary

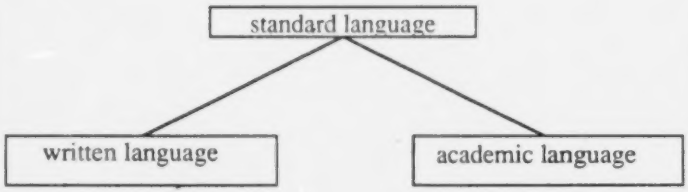
	spoken	written
interactive	+	-
face to face/spatial commonality	+	-
temporal commonality	+	-
spontaneous	+	-
private	+	-
informal	+	-
standard	+-	+

Binary oppositions have, of course, had special status in linguistics, particularly since the influential rhetorical practices of Saussure (langue/parole, synchronic/diachronic, etc). As a discursive practice, such dichotomous pairs have particular effects. They may reduce variation to binary opposition. They may reduce different kinds of difference to a single concept of oppositeness. For example, black/white, male/female, speech/writing do not encode opposites, but differences. And such pairs have to be learned: they are not self-evident. Nevertheless, as a way of organising knowledge, such discrete categories may acquire an independent ontological status, and seem to require only description and not explanation. (See Cameron 1985: 58)

My second set of introductory points is that an educational theory of language must involve a thorough analysis of the relations between the educational system, standard language and written language. For historical and social reasons, in Britain these three things are intimately related to each other (figure 2). **A particular cluster of language**

characteristics - standard, written, formal - is fundamental to the British education system. The education system and Standard English are mutually defining. SE is the expected and appropriate variety in the British education system. Conversely, the education system has been a major standardising force and a major source of the institutional authority of SE. SE cannot really be defined independently of its functions in schools and other institutions. There is a widespread perception that just to speak SE, to make certain sounds, is already to demonstrate one's education. And SE is often identified as public school or Oxford English (meaning the language of the university, not the town!).

Figure 2



The whole Western education system is thoroughly verbal and textual (Van Dijk 1981, Stubbs 1986a chapter 3). The place of written texts, writing and literacy have always been central, and in some contexts 'educated' and 'literate' are synonymous. But the high value placed on written language is a view with its roots in Western culture: it is not universal.

There is also a close relation between written and standard language. It is possible, of course, to have standard spoken language. But only written languages are ever fully standardised. And there is a very strong expectation that all written, certainly all published language is standard (though see section 8).

We require an analysis, therefore, of the relations between **the social institution of the education system** and the concepts of **written**

and standard language. (See Stubbs 1986a chapter 5 for an attempt at such an analysis of SE.)

My first main argument, then, is that an educational theory of written language must have **an institutional basis**: we have to look at the place of written language and literacy in educational and related institutions. Most writing is, after all, institutional and bureaucratic in its functions. The theory must also have **a sociocultural basis**. SE is a social dialect. It has been defined in this way within sociolinguistics, though I will shortly criticise some narrow sociolinguistic definitions of SE for their lack of any theory of society or of social institutions. Literacy is also a set of social practices which differ in different times and places (Brice Heath 1983, Street 1985, Cook-Gumperz ed 1986). And written language is taught, almost always explicitly and consciously: it is therefore always inherently involved in forms of social relations. (See Nystrand, 1986, for a detailed argument.) Such a theory will also be inherently **ideological**: institutions embody ideologies. And such a theory will involve a study of prescriptivism and authority. Inherent in the concept of a standard written language is the concept of its source of prestige and authority.

Such a theory will also have to be **developmental**. This is a matter of definition: education is about change within individuals. It will necessarily be involved with questions such as L1 and L2 acquisition, mother tongue education, the acquisition of literacy, and children's transition from spoken to written language.

In figure 3 I have set out a list of some topics to be analysed by an educational theory of language, plus some basic organising dimensions. I will give a slightly more detailed description of the components of the theory, and then illustrate it in detail with reference to the topics.

We need a great deal of **descriptive information** about the relations between spoken and written language, children's writing development, and so on. Some of this information is already available, but much is not. A description of varieties is in itself of limited value, however. We require also **a theory of language variation**: how varieties relate to the social structure, how they relate to different social classes or groups, and how language symbolises individual and group identity. Part of such

a study is inherently historical, given Labov's (1972) demonstration that synchronic variation is the observable aspect of diachronic change. Such a formulation already implies that language variation must be studied within institutions. An **institutional theory** of language, as I implied above, is really at the centre of what I am proposing here. (Halliday et al's 1964 proposals for an institutional linguistics have been taken up only in a very limited fashion. Milroy's 1980 work on social networks is extremely valuable here. And see Fairclough 1985 for other suggestions.) Educational institutions will clearly be central to the study, and that means we must also study **language policy and planning**: the ways in which literacy and language education more generally have been planned, and ways in which prescriptive attitudes to language have been developed. Government language planning is obviously of central importance given the effect of the Bullock Report (1975), the Swann Report (1985) and English from 5 to 16 (1984). Within the culture of individualism which is now dominant in schools (Hargreaves 1982:90), anything which smacks of social engineering is generally viewed with distaste by teachers. It is impossible to see, however, how an education system could be anything other than social engineering. In any case, the control exerted on the system requires careful analysis. Finally, we require to relate such studies to **pedagogical and classroom practice**.

There is no intended priority between these aspects of the theory. The linguistic is not intended to be privileged at the expense of the social or educational or vice versa. On the contrary, the claim is that any topic **must be treated from all five points of view**. If any single aspect is missing then the theory will be inadequate. What I am really proposing is a way of evaluating work in this area: a set of **criteria against which studies can be judged**.

There are more general organising principles underlying these five: not absolute distinctions, but tendencies. In the order in which I have briefly run through them, there is a move from descriptive to prescriptive, and from linguistic to sociological to psychological.

Figure 3

description .....explanation ..... intervention
descriptive ..... prescriptive
linguistic .....
sociological.....
..... psychological

example topics	1 description of language	2 theory of language variation	3 language in institutions	4 language policy and planning	5 pedagogy and classroom practice

1. standard/non-standard English
2. English spelling
3. writing systems
4. written/spoken language
5. literacy
6. school textbooks
7. dictionaries
8. literary/non-literary language ... etc

Note that a study of prescription is explicitly part of the exercise. Over the past sixty years, the strident demands for descriptivism in linguistics have in effect been a rejection of naive or ill founded prescriptivism. The real objection has not been to prescriptivism *per se*, but to putting the cart before the horse. The real objection has been to description based on *a priori* prescription. Presumably there is at least much less objection - perhaps there is none at all - to prescription based on prior description. Again, there is a cluster of related but distinct terms hidden in the extreme version of the descriptive-prescriptive dichotomy: see figure 4.

Figure 4

descriptive	prescriptive
theoretical	applied
explanation	intervention
understanding the world	changing the world

In any case, the claim to be purely descriptive and value free has often been spurious. For example, no-one has ever managed to define 'literacy' in a way which does not implicitly refer to purposes, and therefore to the value of literacy for individuals or societies. Literacy is always related to the cognitive development of the individual or to the socio-economic development of the society; and development is a prescriptive notion.

The rest of this paper is an attempt to classify and integrate the very wide range of things which are known about written language and to identify areas where basic knowledge is missing. The interpretation may be wrong, but it seems preferable to no attempt at all.

1. Standard English

1.1 Description. Clearly a great deal of descriptive work has been done, but much remains to be done especially of varieties of spoken SE. In addition, we still have only very scanty descriptions of non-standard

dialects of British English. (Edwards et al 1984 summarise a great deal of work.) Certainly the descriptions of non-standard dialects are not set out in an appropriate form for teachers and other educationalists. And some basic descriptive issues are unresolved. For example, Trudgill (1984, and elsewhere) claims that SE is definable with reference to its grammar and vocabulary, and that phonology is irrelevant, since SE can be spoken with any accent. R Coates (1982) has challenged this view and argued that there are standard accent features. For example, a word-initial /h/-less accent or an accent with intervocalic glottal stop in place of /t/ would be perceived as non-standard. Part of the problem is that descriptive definitions of SE have left out of account people's prescriptive perceptions. If speakers believe that some pronunciation features are non-standard, then this is part of the data. Prescriptivism must be studied as part of the phenomenon since standard languages are, by definition, prescriptively constructed.

1.2 Variation. Standardisation is logically related to language variation: there are variant forms in languages, some people think there shouldn't be, and try to select between them. Again, a lot of things are clear. SE is not a geographical dialect, since it varies only slightly (compared with non-standard dialects) in different geographical areas around the world. It is a social dialect. However, it is not adequate to define SE simply as a social dialect: it is an intersection of dialectal and diatypic varieties. It serves particular diatypic functions in education, in writing and in formal discourse. It is neither simply a dialect nor a style.

1.3 Institutions. SE maintains and is maintained by institutions: primarily the education system, publishing houses and the mass media. The spread of international English is obviously related to historical and economic movements and to colonisation. And a characteristic of recent international English is the burgeoning of institutional varieties of English with restricted purpose. (For a cultural and socio-historical account see Milroy & Milroy 1985.)

1.4 Planning. SE did not grow 'naturally'. It is the product of selections and decisions taken by men and women, sometimes individuals such as Samuel Johnson and Noah Webster, and sometimes groups such as teachers, publishers and printers. Most people have, however, lost sight of the means by which SE has been produced and is maintained. This

naturalisation is an effect of institutional power. People treat SE as though it was a natural product and forget the ideological basis of its authority. Standard languages do not reproduce themselves, though they tend to deceive people into believing that they do; and this in turn is an essential part of their ability to operate as means of social control. The actual production of SE is mystified, ignored or suppressed, and it is seen as a finished product. For example, despite a certain amount of recent publicity given to Robert Burchfield, and anecdotes in the press about his very personal decisions which have led to the inclusion of some words in the supplement to the OED, these are treated as minor and likeable individual deviations: something he deserves after many years' work on an impersonal product. The source of **his** authority remains implicit, and the personal decisions of dozens of co-workers which pervade the dictionary are ignored (cf section 7 below on dictionaries). But SE is a construct and is therefore available for deconstruction.

1.5 Pedagogy. The pedagogical issues to do with SE have made disappointingly little progress. There are many studies of non-standard dialects showing that they are complex, systematic and functional. But this large body of work has been largely unable to generate a coherent pedagogical practice and theory, which would give teachers clear guidance on the place of standard and non-standard varieties in the classroom. Some superficially rational initiatives have largely collapsed: for example, the idea of publishing basal readers in non-standard dialects. Current pedagogical thinking seems to revolve around three principles: the responsibility to teach SE given its place as the dominant high prestige variety required in the job market; the pointlessness of attempting to teach spoken forms of SE, and the dangers of correcting children's spoken language given the relations between children's spoken language and their individual and group identity; and the strategy of teaching SE, therefore, in explicit relation to written forms and particularly to the demands of public examinations (see Richmond 1982, Milroy & Milroy 1985).

These comments refer mainly to teaching English as a mother tongue in British schools. With reference to teaching English as a foreign or second language overseas, there is considerable confusion over the issue of local standards (Indian, West African, etc). (Stubbs 1986a chapter 5 develops several of these arguments about SE in more detail.)

2. English Spelling

Spelling is the aspect of English which has been most clearly standardised. But despite its apparent simplicity in this respect, it raises several fundamental problems.

2.1 Description. Much descriptive work has been done on how English spelling works as a mixed phonemic, morphonemic and morpholexical system. But there are still many uncertainties over what would constitute the most consistent description, and over whether it is moving further towards a logographic system (as Sampson 1985 claims).

2.2 Variation. Spelling is the most highly standardised aspect of English, with hardly any permitted variation. On the other hand, there is great variation in the competence of individual users, which makes spelling different from other aspects of language usually discussed by linguists, and especially from phonology. In turn, the usage of individuals has hardly been described at all. Several studies have been published on children's invented spellings (eg Bissex 1980). But almost no descriptive work has been done on the wide variety of usages and practices which have grown up around the institutional system, for example: the incorrect spellings everywhere on notices and signs; the abbreviations used in newspaper small ads; the parodies of traditional spellings seen in house names; the spellings used in brand names for consumer products.

Williams (1961:245; 1984:217,254) has written about the 'orthography of the uneducated'. By this he means the literary convention by which, in novels, class and regional dialects are represented by errors in spelling. These misspellings are themselves conventional, and part of a wider system (which Williams does not analyse) in comics, cartoons and graffiti. For example, by a spelling such as 'wot' for 'what' an author might indicate that a speaker is ignorant or working class or both: although 'wot' could spell an educated middle class pronunciation. The assumption appears to be that the standard correct spelling corresponds to the standard correct pronunciation. A deviation from one represents a deviation from the other and therefore from educated middle class norms. A full analysis would be complex, but Williams is pointing to a cluster of prescriptive beliefs and literary conventions to do with

spelling, pronunciation, dialect, error, social class, education. A complex cluster of social beliefs and practices can be indexed just by an author writing 'wot'.

2.3 Institutions. Such observations make very problematic the prescriptive-descriptive distinction which linguists normally take for granted. There is a largely unexplored relation between the institutionally prescribed system controlled by publishers and the education system, and individual practice. And linguists appear to differ quite sharply amongst themselves on what the implications of these relations might be (see Stubbs, 1986b). The spelling system is one of the detailed and concrete ways in which power is exercised in society. It acts as a highly selective filter when people are trying to pass public examinations or get jobs; it is the focus of large commercial publishing enterprises and letters to newspapers; and it is debated in the House of Lords.

2.4 Planning. The spelling system is, *par excellence*, the aspect of language which many people would like to keep under conscious planning control, though plans for reform have obviously never been taken up in Britain. A thorough study of documents would be useful, for example publications such as the newsletter of the Simplified Spelling Society, to see to what extent such discussion corresponds with linguists' understanding of how the system operates. Prescriptive attitudes should themselves be a topic of study. This would be particularly valuable with respect to spelling, since there are quite deep disagreements over concepts such as 'error', 'rule' and 'regularity' in English spelling (again see Stubbs, 1986b).

2.5 Pedagogy. Despite a vast pedagogical literature, there is an unresolved current debate over whether spelling should be 'caught or taught', acquired or consciously learned. Current pedagogical debates over spelling are related to debates over first language acquisition and foreign language teaching.

3. Writing systems

Work on English spelling is often very ethnocentric and discussed in ignorance of what is possible and normal in writing systems for other

languages, alphabetic, syllabic or logographic. If I had space here, I would also illustrate the proposed classificatory framework in detail on writing systems in general. There is certainly still much work to be done on the **description** of individual writing systems, and on the **variation** across possible writing systems for human languages. This would include a theory of typology and a study of the relation between type of writing system and type of language. (See Sampson 1985 for a major start.) Writing systems have been legitimated by **institutions** in the wider community. These have often been religious, and the spread of writing systems has often been due to religious and political colonisation. The geographical distribution of major writing systems in the world - Roman, Cyrillic, Arabic, Chinese, Japanese - correlates with major economic, political and religious power blocs. There are many case studies available on **planning and policy**, for countries such as China, Haiti and Turkey, on the invention, reform and replacement of writing systems, or on resistance to reform. And the **pedagogical** literature is enormous: from attempts such as ita, to the possible cognitive effects of the Vai syllabary.

A case study of the Chinese writing system would show very clearly the inseparability of the dimensions of figure 3 above. In **descriptive** terms, the system is morphemographic: characters represent morphemes. This morphemographic system allows a wide **variety** of otherwise mutually incomprehensible dialects of Chinese to be represented by the same characters. There is also variation within the system between traditional and simplified versions of the characters. This internal variation is related to the **institutional** uses of the system: for example, within the People's Republic, simplified characters have promoted some everyday handwritten usages to printed forms. And both these issues of variation are inseparable, in Chinese political terms, from issues of **language planning**. They relate to beliefs about the national unity of the language, and about the relationship between language policy and the material practices of the mass of the common people (Livesey 1986).

4. Written language

4.1 Description. Much description and conceptual work has been done recently, particularly on the syntactic differences between spoken and written English (for example by Brazil, G Brown, Crystal, Chafe, Givon,

Ochs and Tannen). (See Hudson 1984 for general discussion and detailed references.) Written and spoken English clearly share the same basic clause structures, but differ sharply in their derived structures (Halliday 1985:xxiv). Much of this work concerns the motivation for such differences in the different psycholinguistic processing required for written and spoken language. For example, the real time processing of spoken language requires a basic organisation in which one thing is said about one thing at a time, and this leads to topic-comment structures which typify spoken rather than written English.

There has also been increasing work on the influence of permanent written texts on surface syntactic structure. A basic hypothesis has been that languages develop overt formally marked subordinate clauses under the influence of their use in writing. The basic argument is that lack of shared context demands overt structures (eg restrictive relative clauses) to enable referents to be correctly identified (eg Kalmar 1985). However, hypotheses in this area have to be very carefully formulated. Deuchar (in Hudson 1983) reports that American Sign Language appears to be developing just such subordinating structures, as it comes to be used frequently on television. Since ASL is obviously neither spoken nor written, it is presumably the public, non-face to face uses of the variety, where users cannot directly interact with each other, which trigger the formal elaboration. In general, the most striking differences between spoken and written English are found in comparisons of informal conversations and formal expository texts, and differences are sometimes attributed to modality when they should be attributed to function (Nystrand, 1986). Again, this emphasises that the written-spoken distinction must be seen as **typical configurations of parameters, not as a binary opposition**.

In some cases, however, there is rather elementary descriptive work to be done. One cliché about spoken and written language is that spoken language is transitory and written language is permanent. In some ways, this is in any case false: written language can be altered or erased without trace, at least in drafts. With the arrival of word processing, the cliché is even less true. The relative stability of a written record gives way to a dynamic screen display. Written text can be altered, edited, reformatted with ease, leaving no signs whatsoever of any changes. The concept of a written text becomes profoundly different. Its present form is just one of

a possible series of transformations, some of which can be carried out automatically by programmed repetitive edits. A recent publication by NATE (1986) discusses some of the implications of this for teaching English as a mother tongue. But detailed descriptive studies require to be done on how such developments in technology are affecting the forms and uses of written texts. (See Bell 1984 for an interesting study of the effect of word processing technology on the form of newspaper reports.)

Another area where much basic descriptive work requires to be done is lexical density. Ure (1971) discusses the concept of the differing lexical densities of spoken and written texts, and provides much useful basic statistical data. The lexical density of a text is its relative proportion of lexical to grammatical words. Very briefly, one would expect a high proportion of lexical words in written language, which can be more highly packed with information. Ure reports on corpora of 42 000 words of spoken and written text. She shows a strong tendency for written texts to have a lexical density of over 40% (range 36% to 57%) and for spoken texts to be under 40% (range 24% to 43%). Using computational methods (reported in Stubbs 1986c), I have studied the lexical densities of some of the sub-texts of the London-Lund corpus of half a million words of spoken English. My figures are rather different from Ure's. Briefly, I found in this spoken data high lexical densities which characterise Ure's written corpus: from around 44% for telephone conversations to around 55% for radio commentaries.

This tells something about the corpus itself, on which two massive standard grammars of English have been based (Quirk et al 1972, 1985). The corpus is explicitly educated adult usage. The speakers are academics, doctors, politicians, secretaries, journalists and the like: that is, speakers whose spoken usage is doubtless influenced by written usage, and therefore not characteristic of the language of the majority of the population. Note again the empirical relation between written, educated, standard, academic usage. It has often been pointed out that linguists' descriptions are largely based on highly standardised, edited, consciously constructed examples, and are therefore characteristic of written rather than spoken usage. The common Chomskyan claim to be studying language independent of its medium of transmission is simply false. Many linguists' descriptions are based on a highly literate variety which lacks the degree of variability inherent in spontaneous unplanned spoken

usage. The very fact of basing a study of language on sentences biases the study towards units of written language. In this respect, much linguistics has not escaped the prescriptive pull of written language. (There are other more specific demonstrations of the ways in which alphabetic writing has led to a Western phoneme-based bias in phonological theory. For example, phoneme theory developed out of very practical concerns with systems of shorthand, spelling reform and foreign language teaching.)

This is probably the most important theoretical reason for studying thoroughly the relations between written, standard and educated norms of usage: that they have seriously distorted linguistic theory, even amongst those who claim to study language 'descriptively'. In its written and standard forms, linguistic behaviour is focussed, codified and institutionalised. Linguists are speakers of standard languages for obvious social and educational reasons. Writing has the analytic effect of focussing attention on forms and meanings out of context. Standard languages are, by definition, less variable than non-standard languages. And when linguists cite examples of language they are often carefully mulled over and edited, and therefore more like written language than spoken. The net effect of these various focussing forces is to make the linguist's concept of language a highly abstract one, not unlike the lay stereotype of a 'language'. One of the most thorough attacks on linguistic theory, along these lines, is by Le Page and Tabouret Keller (1985:202):

> 'linguistic theory tends to be ...conceptualised in terms of the standard forms of highly focussed languages'.

4.2 Variation. Compared to spoken language, written language is less variable. The suppression of variability points to the inherently conservative ideology underlying the construction of a standard written language.

For simple reasons, written language is better described than spoken. It is a body of texts and records, not behaviour, and is therefore open to observation. There is therefore a **logical relation between standard forms, written forms and description**. The concept of a language as a fixed objective system has been very productive in the history of linguistic analysis, but it is an ideologically loaded objectivist concept.

Williams (1977:26-27) has discussed the influence of written language on linguistic theory. Linguists are highly literate and linguistic studies derive historically from a highly literate tradition. Historical-comparative linguistics was based on a body of written records and depended on the study of classical European languages. Within linguistics it is changes in the concept of data which have led to profound changes in linguistic theory, and also to profound changes in the theoretical and ideological significance of linguistic variation. For example, when Boas, Sapir and Bloomfield argued for the priority of the spoken language, they were also making highly ideological statements about the value of Amerindian languages and cultures. Within linguistics, statements about speech-writing relations are in the nature of manifestos which go back into the history of linguistics as an academic discipline. Such statements characteristically mix logical, chronological and ideological arguments (Stubbs 1980:21ff) with positions to be fought over the institutional status of linguistics as separate from the study of classical languages. All theories are value loaded, and books, writing and literacy are central to modern conceptions of language, both lay and professional.

Closely related to the observer's paradox is the **describer's paradox**: that descriptions are likely to become untrue as soon as they are published. Descriptions of social reality become persuasive as soon as people become aware of them. For example, the attention that linguists have given to non-standard dialects of English, community languages in Britain, and British and American Sign Language has changed the status of these languages. Sometimes this has been the overt aim: to attack the notion that such language varieties are in any way 'primitive'. But they mean that **description becomes prescription due to dissemination** (Andreski 1974). This means that social scientists must at least consider the implications of their work being disseminated to the public: there is no such thing as pure research on language and society. The research may change the reality it purports to describe. And, again, any crude version of the descriptive-prescriptive dichotomy is seen as untenable.

4.3 Institutions. Written language makes a radical difference to the complexity of organisation that humans can manage, since it changes the relation between memory and classification, and allows many forms of

referencing, cataloguing, indexing, recording and transmitting information. Bureaucratic institutions, from small businesses to modern states, depend on written records. But a great deal of ethnographic work requires to be done within institutions, to study the channels along which messages are passed, and to give some substance to the broad generalisations which are often made about the place of written language in institutions.

An analysis of written language also requires to be placed within an analysis of signifying systems. The mere fact **that** something is written conveys its own message, for example of permanence and authority. Certain people write and certain things get written; though this is currently changing fast with the increasing use of word processing: typeset publications no longer have the same connotations as they had a few years ago. The relation between messages and forms of representation is not historically fixed, and such representations are themselves open to examination for the messages they convey. Illiteracy carries its own symbolic significance and stereotyped connotations of poverty and crime. Written language itself represents an orientation to the dominant mainstream culture: which is probably one reason why it is rejected by many pupils in their more general rejection of dominant modes of education and culture. (See analyses by Barthes 1973 and Foucault 1980 of the ideological context of literary production and consumption, and of the perceptions of the role of writers in contemporary society.)

Figure 5: Correlations, but no more, within English lexis

spoken	written
everyday	academic
common	specialist
frequent	rare
informal	formal
monosyllabic	polysyllabic
Germanic	Romance/Graeco-Latin
acquired	learned
active	passive
core	non-core

As a specific example of the way in which descriptive, institutional and pedagogical issues are inseparable in a study of written language, take the case of the English lexis. One crude but useful generalisation is that spoken language shows more variation than written language at all levels of description except lexis (Halliday 1985:xxiv). It is evident both that lexical elaboration/density of individual texts is higher, on average, for written texts; but also that the lexis of written registers is more elaborated for the language as a whole. This observation requires a **theory of lexical variation** for the vocabulary of a language: a theory of the differential elaboration of the vocabulary of spoken and written English. It seems to require essentially a theory of core versus non-core vocabulary. (In Stubbs 1986a chapter 6 I propose such a theory in detail.) But again, the dichotomies written/spoken and core/non-core demand deconstruction: see figure 5.

For well known historical reasons - 1066, Norman French, Latin and all that - the language of learning has a social class basis (Williams 1961:240). This broad split in English vocabulary is **institutionalised**. There is differential social class access to the non-core vocabulary, given the history of English and the way in which Graeco-Latin loan words have been used to build up the vocabularies of academic disciplines, medicine and the law. In addition, the way in which vocabularies have been elaborated to build up semantic fields in such areas of knowledge gives differential access to subjects on the school curriculum. (See Corson 1985 for a detailed argument along these lines, although I disagree with many details of his argument: Stubbs, in press, b). Again we have a case where a thorough analysis requires detailed linguistic description, a theory of linguistic variation, a conceptual analysis which deconstructs the written-spoken distinction, a study of social class and institutional usages, and a study of pedagogical issues of access to curricular knowledge.

4.5 Pedagogy. As with Standard English, this large and complex body of work on written language has led only to disappointingly imprecise prescriptions for teaching practice, but various principles do seem clear. I suppose we might expect wide agreement on Halliday's view (1978:234) that language education has to do with learning new registers, and that written language offers an extension of pupils' functional meaning

potential. We are dealing not only with forms, though these are important, but also with meanings. Since written language is characteristically taught, and not acquired naturally, it is immediately involved in new forms of social relations: with the teacher and also with distant or anonymous or hypothetical audiences. It has been pointed out that the work on writing by Britton et al (1975) inherently involves new forms of authority relations between teachers and pupils.

Further, once the written-spoken dichotomy has been deconstructed, it is evident that children learning to write have to make a whole series of related transitions: figure 6. This rather simple observation requires to be developed into a whole **theory of transitions** through which children have to pass in the education system, and related to the large literature on home-school transitions, and how such transitions may contribute to explanations of educational success and failure.

Figure 6: Transitions in learning to write

spoken	written
casual	formal
spontaneous	planned
private	public
non-standard	standard
L1	L2

Even the partly deconstructed series of transitions in figure 6 is not an adequate model, however, since it still implies a linear sequence: children learn spoken language and then written language. But work on emergent literacy shows that speech and writing develop simultaneously. In a literate culture, children learn some things about written language before they learn everything about spoken language. Writing affects speech. (And many adults learning a foreign language are already literate in their native language.)

However, the basic observation does lead to a whole series of practical pedagogical suggestions to the effect that children should not be forced to

learn too much at once. For example, Barnes (1976) emphasises the value of first draft writing: not forcing children to produce final drafts at the same time as they are trying to forumulate ideas. There is much discussion of the value of small group discussion as a semi-public preparation for writing. Richmond's (1982) recommendation that standard forms of syntax should be required only late in the curriculum under the pressure of public examinations also separates this aspect of writing from others.

5. Literacy

I do not have the space or the ability to deal with literacy or reading in general in this paper, and I will restrict myself to a key exemplar in Western education, namely school textbooks. Some of the key arguments about literacy, which are directly relevant to my overall argument, have been set out elsewhere. For example, Brice Heath (1983), Street (1985) and Cook-Gumperz ed (1986) show that literacy is not a neutral technology or skill, but a set of diverse social practices. What is regarded as functional differs at different times and in different places, and is maintained by different social groups and institutions. Literacy is not simply a single set of competences which have to be transmitted by schools.

6. Textbooks

An important topic for an educational theory of written language must be books used in schools. Written language, standard language, textbooks, teachers and the school all have perceived authority (Luke et al 1983). We therefore require an analysis of the ways in which this authority is expressed in language, and therefore of **the relation between linguistic usages and the authority of curricular knowledge**. Such an analysis would be part of a wider analysis of **the relations between written language, knowledge and power** (Foucault 1980). It seems evident in the case of school textbooks that there are relations between their forms of language, the institutions in which they are used, the social and intellectual control which they support, and the pedagogical practices which they assume. Although, as often, the linguistic mechanisms of power are not studied (Foucault 1980:116).

6.1-2 Description and variation. Much very valuable description has been done. For example, Perera (1984) has analysed the lexis and syntax of school textbooks which cause problems in comprehension for pupils. Some work on 'readability' (not Perera's) is rather narrow in its concepts. But beyond narrow readability formulae, there is also increasing work on the textual organisation of books (Lunzer & Gardner 1984) and therefore on ways in which knowledge is framed. Information can be represented, segmented or denied representation by the use of 'important words', summaries, comprehension questions or titles. Other analyses (Nystrand, 1986) show that readability is not a feature of the text in isolation. Different readers may find the same text easy or difficult, since readability depends on a balance between what is known and what is new, and therefore it depends on a social relation between writer and reader.

There are also now increasingly precise descriptions of the ways in which books for children construct a view of childhood itself. Books are written for audiences, and therefore embody assumptions about their audiences. These assumptions are therefore inseparable from assumptions about the nature of texts. For example, Freebody and Baker (1985) have studied some of the ways in which the first school books are a critical agent of socialisation. They have done detailed statistical analyses of a corpus of initial reading primers. They find that words referring to **children** are always sex-specific: the sex indefinite word **child** entirely fails to appear. The words **boy/boys** are more frequent than **girl/girls**. **Boy** is more likely than **girl** to be singular: that is, boys appear more often as individuals, girls more often in groups. Some verbs occur only with **boy/s** as subject; no verbs occur only with **girl/s**. It is clear that such use of language is itself constituting and legimating a concept of childhood.

A fundamental topic is 'how effects of truth are produced within discourse' (Foucault 1980:118, cf 131). School textbooks often present information as neutral or objective. Authors are assumed to be corporate or anonymous: there is a lack of an explicitly personal world view, identifiable and fallible (Cameron 1985:vii-ix). This may be a feature of the books themselves or of the way they are used by teachers, but authorship is often irrelevant to teachers and pupils (Luke et al 1983). However, writing is always aligned: it always expresses propositions

from a certain point of view. We therefore require detailed linguistic description and theory which shows how language is used to convey a writer's attitude to propositions: whether they are taken for granted as the expression of true, certain, neutral, objective, authoritative statements, or are hypothetical and tentative, personal and subjective. In order to study how ideologies are conveyed by texts, we therefore require studies of modality (Stubbs 1986c) or 'evidentiality' (Chafe 1985). Chafe claims that written and spoken English treat evidentiality differently, and this is confirmed by corpus-based studies. For example, J Coates (1982) found that epistemic modals were less frequent in formal, written language than in informal, spoken language. And Holmes (1983) found that lexical items marking degree of certainty constituted 3.5% of any text on average, but were only half as frequent in written language as in spoken. Tannen (1985) argues that such observations amount to an explanatory hypothesis to account for variation in many kinds of discourse, and represent a basic distinction between discourse which focuses on information and discourse which focuses on personal involvement. Brown (1978) has made similar suggestions.

6.3-4 Institutions and planning. School texts are highly selected and controlled by institutions such as examination boards. Texts may be selected by the teacher, distributed for the lesson, interpreted by the teacher or via another text (eg study notes), and then withdrawn. The amount of control over school textbooks, and whether this control is central or local, differs greatly in different countries: compare for example the central control in Germany versus the teacher's autonomy in Britain. The existence of books as material objects is controlled by publishing houses, who therefore also exercise control over content, form, dissemination and reproduction. The most extreme commercial control may be exercised by American publishers of basal reading courses: millions of dollars are invested in the market research and production of such reading schemes. Exact figures are not known, since they are not published: the commercial operations are treated as highly secret by the firms involved. We are dealing with officially and commercially sanctioned versions of knowledge.

An educational theory of school textbooks would therefore deal with the centrality of texts to Western education. It would note that each historical

genre of written text has served particular social and cultural functions: consider translations of the bible, novels, reading primers, textbooks and newspapers (Williams 1961). As new forms of written language, such as computer files and electronic mail, become available, they too come to be used to create new forms of social relations.

6.5 Pedagogy. The authority of textbooks as a source of curricular knowledge is related to the view that the meaning of a book is 'in' the text. However, students' interpretations of texts can be widely different under different classroom practices. Quite different views of knowledge are transmitted by the hidden curriculum of dictation, rote memorisation, oral recitation, explication de texte, silent reading or small group discussion. A basic distinction is between a student's unmediated reading, or a use of a text which is mediated by the teacher's 'expert' interpretation or by study notes. Again, the use and interpretation of texts in classrooms is inseparable from social relations.

So what would a theoretically coherent account of school textbooks look like, as an analysis of a particular use of written language in education? It would require a study of the forms of language which are used to convey authoritative meanings, and a study therefore of ways in which knowledge and power are constructed. Much relevant textual analysis has been done within the sociology of science and within English for Specific Purposes. Swales (1985) studies the scientific paper as a genre, to show how private notes are turned into public papers and manufactured as knowledge. Such studies in turn force the development of different kinds of linguistic description, since our present descriptions are not capable of describing the ways in which such meanings are conveyed.

A study of textbooks would also require a study of the theory of meaning implicit in them. There has been much discussion recently of two related themes: that written texts encourage the analytic separation of what the speaker/writer means, from what the reader means, and from what the text means; and the pedagogic view that literacy and/or schooling facilitates this detachment of language and thinking from the immediate context. (One of the most influential versions of these views is Popper's 1972 theory of World 3.) I do not think that anyone would now try to maintain an extreme version of the view that the meaning of a written text

is 'in' the text. (For example, Nystrand, 1986, has very thoroughly disposed of Olson's 1977 version of that argument.) In any case it is evident that different historical periods, different occupational/social/educational groups have made different assumptions about whether meaning is 'in' the text (Eisenstein 1985). There is the lengthy debate within literary criticism over the intentionalist fallacy. In contract law, arguments have to be based on what people actually say or write: one is committed to the words of the contract, not to what one claims was meant or intended - nevertheless, the interpretation of contracts depends on precedent. And for a famous and highly socially and politically situated view, there is Luther's statement that 'the meaning of the Scripture depends, not upon the doctrine of the Church, but on a deeper reading of the text'.

The question of whether the text is autonomous and relatively independent of context is logically related to other formulations: which aspects of language use are purely linguistic? and which depend on real world knowledge and on more general principles of rationality and inference? I assume that one has to reject the view that meaning is 'in' written text alone, and accept that meaning depends on reciprocal relations between writer and reader. However, it is still arguable that spoken and written texts convey different orientations to meaning, since the relationship is different in the two cases between: addressor, addressee, text, context of production and context of reception. Goffman (1981) has provided the basis for an ethnographic model which can account for different relations between an addressor and a message. Goffman points out that the concept of 'speaker' requires analysis. He distinguishes the **animator** who produces the actual vocal sound; the **author** who encodes the message; and the **principal** who is committed to what is said. In everyday conversation, animator, author and principal typically coincide. But a BBC newsreader is only animator, and a political speech writer is only author, and so on. Goffman points out, but does not develop the point, that written language facilitates the separation of speaker/writer from commitment to the message conveyed. Written texts are never context free. But they can be **re**contextualised in different institutional settings. Thus the technology of the media raises problems of interpretation.

I am arguing that we have the beginnings of a theory which could relate: linguistic forms and the meanings they convey about the authoritativeness of knowledge; socially and historically changing views about the relation of speech, writing and meaning; ethnographic studies of the uses of spoken and written language to convey different relations between speaker/writer and meanings; and pedagogic views about the effect of written language on thinking.

7. Dictionaries

Again, if I had more space I would discuss dictionaries as a particular kind of authoritative book which is central to education. As a genre, they have always been biased towards written language. Some are claimed as descriptions of usage, though they are typically regarded as authoritative and prescriptive by users. And dictionaries such as the OED which are based on citations from actual usage are based on selections from usage which places written language, and especially 'literature', above everyday spoken language. There is no doubt either that the definitions found in dictionaries display the bases of the particular social group who constructed them: mainly white middle class males. Their definitions are aligned. Their authority is social and political. They are a major agent in standardising the language. And they have a particular place in educational and other social institutions. (Cameron 1985:81-4 sketches the beginning of a feminist analysis of dictionaries.)

8. Literature

Again, if I had space, I would attempt a detailed demonstration that the relation between literary and non-literary language is also amenable to study along the lines I have proposed. Such a demonstration would involve: a description of the internal organisation of, and intertextual relations between, literary texts; a study of the historical construction of the literary canon (Eagleton 1983 provides a detailed argument); and a study of the relations between literary language and the standardisation of English (which is very explicit, for example, in the preface to Johnson's dictionary of 1755).

The direct link to my main theme becomes explicit if one looks at **the different possible relations between written, literary, standard and published language**. Gregory (1979, 1984, 1986) has studied these relations with reference to a large body of working class community published writing, as opposed to writing published within the dominant mainstream culture. His work is based on a large corpus, not only of the writing itself, but also of interviews with those producing it and historical data from earlier periods. His work amounts to a detailed deconstruction of often taken for granted assumptions about writing, publishing, social class and their interrelations. He assumes that social class is itself a relation: to means of production. Published writing is overwhelmingly in the hands of the middle class. Our traditional views of literature are permeated by assumptions about how literature is produced: which social groups write, and who publishes writing. (In a notorious case, Chris Searle lost his job as a teacher in a London school because he published the writing of a group of children.) Our views are also permeated with assumptions about the relation between individual creativity and writing, as opposed to collective or group writing. The view of the solitary, individual author was strengthened by Romanticism, but it is not a necessary state. Gregory takes pairs of terms in effect, such as those in figure 7, and shows that the traditional configurations are not the only possible ones. For example, there is group writing in non-standard English and published by collectives based in the community. Some of this writing has a close relation to oral history, though the expectation that prose documentary should be the appropriate genre for working class writers can itself become restricting. Gregory discusses these topics within the question of what would constitute a working class education.

Figure 7

written	spoken
published	oral
standard	non-standard
individual	group/collective/community
middle class	working class
establishment	resistance

If I had the space or the ability for a broader structuralist analysis, these themes could be related to the two deeply opposed views of mass education which were debated in the nineteenth century: on the one hand, that mass education would threaten the power of the middle and upper classes; on the other, that mass education was necessary for a modern industrial society. They could also be related to the opposition which is still being hotly debated in the twentieth century: between the social and individual aims of education (see Hargreaves 1982 chapter 4, Williams 1961). (And for different analyses of the dichotomies standard/non-standard, language/anti-language, establishment/resistance see Halliday 1978:178-9.) Issues of linguistic standardisation, written language and elementary literacy have historically always been realted to the orderliness of the worker in industrial society.

Concluding comments

In the immediate context of the BAAL conference, I have tried to provide an organising framework which can help to integrate the huge mass of apparently rather disparate work on written language, which can help to identify gaps in our knowlege, and which can help different bits of the puzzle to be fitted together. The notion of rational scientific progress applies only to a series of theories which are welded into a research programme. It is this kind of programme, rather than isolated theoretical statements, which characterises a mature phase of scientific work (Lakatos 1970).[2]

I have therefore discussed in this paper how knowledge from linguistics as an academic discipline and from other sources might be transformed into an educational research programme. I have tried to tackle the problem of how the discipline might be reorganised into something new by linguists and educationalists working collaboratively. The history of linguistics over the last seventy years has been a history of dichotomies which have been highly productive, but ultimately misleading. (See Wilkins 1982 on 'dangerous dichotomies' in applied linguistics.) I have tried in this paper to deconstruct a few more in a constructive way.

I have tried to convey just one underlying proposition though in the indirect, elaborated discourse of formal academic papers. I don't understand why 'Spoken Language' was the topic for the 1985 BAAL Seminar and 'Written Language' the topic for the 1986 seminar. What is required is an applied theory of **language** which is based on its different realisations in both modalities. The term **written language** does not represent a category with any descriptive or theoretical validity, since it confuses: a range of forms and functions, with a range of social practices, with some of the mechanisms of institutional power, and with pedagogical and everyday stereotypes.

Well, actually, that's not quite true: I think I do understand why such conference topics were chosen, and I have tried to provide an analysis of just that in this paper. But in doing so, I have argued that the category of **written language** is a socio-historical construct, and not a linguistic concept. I think this is why debates about written English, Standard English, English language and English literature, often crystallise very deep cultural conflicts.

What I am arguing for is a research programme which achieves a genuine synthesis of linguistic and cultural analysis. A large number of research projects ignore one or the other, or merely juxtapose them in an unintegrated way.

Notes

1. I am grateful to Tony Burgess for detailed discussion of this idea. In an MA course which they teach at the University of London Institute of Education, Tony Burgess and Jane Miller develop in detail an argument around this theme. See also Stubbs 1986a for further ideas on the form of such a theory.

2. Such a framework also has other functions. For example, the RSA Diploma in Language in Education is designed explicitly around essentially this framework. It was developed by myself, Peter Ali, Hilary Hester, Lynette Murphy O'Dwyer, Celia Roberts and Ming Tsow. I have also discussed elsewhere (Stubbs 1986a chapter 4) how a syllabus on modern English

language for schools can be based on essentially the same organisation.

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PREDICTING TEXTS: ASPECTS OF A STRATEGIC MODEL OF TEXT COMPREHENSION

Ulrike Hanna Meinhof
University of Sussex

The concept of authenticity (Breen 1986) has caught foreign language pedagogy in a seemingly unsolvable paradox. On the one hand, the theoretical definition of language as fully encoded socio-cultural behaviour, as discourse, calls for 'authentic' texts as the best source of such language. Only original pieces of written or spoken language which occurred naturally between native speakers can be accepted as genuine communicative acts. Since the language of these acts was not invented by a textbook writer to fulfil a particular function but actually occurred, these texts are simultaneous realisations of all communicative functions by their very nature. As such they avoid the much discussed dilemma endemic to notional/functional syllabus design, that form cannot be predicted from function (see for example Widdowson 1983, Meinhof 1984).

On the other hand, the methodology of instructing through the medium of such texts deauthenticates precisely those elements which made them originally authentic: placing them in a classroom falsifies their linguistic and social environment, their inscribed addressee, their function as communicative acts.

Yet writers of articles and of textbooks have claimed authenticity for vastly divergent practices. According to some sources authenticity is not negatively affected by the reprinting of an original extract in a language manual, by shortening, editing or reformulating of parts of the text: not even by the writing of material for the relevant linguistic target level. (For some German examples, see Gutschow's call for a 'cleaned up colloquial language', a 'bereinigte Umgangssprache', Gutschow 1977 p7: an adjustment of the language to the learner's level. Gerdes 1984: cutting down of originals to an ideal textbook length. Kormann 1977; Drochner & Fohr 1985.) Even the best of practices where great care is taken not to

tamper with the original (see for example Edelhoff 1985, Hog et al 1984) cannot counteract the dilemma of the texts appearing outside their normal sociocultural environment. Taking authenticity in a number of possible ways, as authenticity of language, of situation, of context, of interaction between reader and writer or speaker and listener, most of the so-called authentic texts in our classrooms fail on all accounts, but all of them fall somewhere short of real authenticity. This does not necessarily render the use of such texts pedagogically useless. But given that authenticity is such a dubious concept, are they still worth all the trouble caused by the other dilemmas intrinsic to the use of such material: their linguistic difficulty and their lack of gradability?

What seems like a paradox from the discussion so far is not however unsolvable. It is true that if we accept original texts as the best source of culturally encoded language for the classroom, two key problems will have to be overcome: 1. linguistic difficulty; 2. inauthenticity. But interestingly, these two problems are interrelated, so that what helps solve the one equally solves the other. In other words, original texts are difficult to comprehend for the very reasons which cause them to be least authentic: by virtue of the extraction of the discourse from its natural time and place of occurrence, by the changing of its linguistic context, by the violation of its original communicative function. And inversely: attempting to reauthenticate original texts for and with our learners by a number of pedagogic strategies also makes them linguistically accessible.

The following paper will explain this interconnected process of authenticating and making comprehensible by presenting some of the key strategies used in the classroom.

Activating Situational Knowledge

Strategy no. 1: Activation of all information learners have, can infer, or can compile about the situation type which a text encodes.

Text, or discourse, is a (unique) realisation in language of a (typifiable) situation. Situation types are determined by three parameters: tenor, field, and mode (eg Halliday 1978). Tenor refers to the participants, field to the ongoing activity, inclusive of theme and topic, and mode to

the adopted channel and genre. All texts are simultaneously encoding all three, and all participants in natural discourse share knowledge about these three, albeit often unconsciously.

How can students gather knowledge about these three parameters if they are confronted with texts whose situation type is either not known at all, or unfamiliar, ie with texts outside their natural setting.

There are several different ways of attempting the recontextualising of separate texts, but one of the most striking for a foreign language classroom is very rarely discussed and practised: the involvement of learners themselves in the choice of the discourse they are to study. (For the most notable exception in literacy work, see Freire 1972.) By allowing the learners to participate in the collection and selection of the texts themselves, they are gaining access to textual and contextual information which would otherwise be obscured: for example information about the sources of the texts, the contexts in which they occur, their position in these contexts, their original length etc. Additionally by allowing the students' own interests to guide their choices we are avoiding a decision on their behalf of what might constitute their interests and 'needs'. Yet, we are not abandoning the pedagogically important possibility of influencing their choices by the sets of resources we are helping to provide. This search for the text can be divided into three stages: collection of material, selection of text, and juxtaposition of texts by contrast. All three stages will be framed by the three situational parameters of field, tenor and mode, priorising one of the three for the initial collection of material. A typical field based collection might for example juxtapose different texts about the same theme: pollution, or housing, or nuclear energy. Alternatively, the initial collection can be started from tenor criteria by collecting texts from or addressed to different groups. For example texts produced by or directed towards young people as against old, affluent vs poor, or women vs men. A mode based collection might start with different samples of the same text type, for example sets of newspapers or magazines, or sets of radio interviews. Either situational parameter can thus serve as starting point. But this priorisation of one of the three situational parameters for organising the initial collection of material must not overlook the essential aspect, that all texts are encoding all three parameters simultaneously. In the subsequent selection of sets of texts and their contrastive juxtaposition

those parameters which were neglected in the original should be incorporated or even foregrounded.

Example 1: Choosing texts

All this needs clarifying through practical examples. The teaching unit I want to present was developed with groups of university students of post O Level standard of German.

We began from a set of West German magazines (ie a mode based starting point). There are obvious advantages in the use of current issues of different magazines. They are relatively easy of access, they reflect mass concerns of the German public; they create and reinforce opinions, they inform and entertain; they have a clear sense of addressed readership built into every aspect of design, style, topic selection etc. The students were asked to choose one magazine each from a pile of about 30, take it home and return to class with (a) a content list of themes and topics covered in their issue (field criteria) and (b) a list of the categories of adverts in the magazines. In class the information was pooled, and from it the presumed readership of each magazine established (tenor criteria). To give some examples of the actual results worked out by the students themselves:

Spiegel — male and female professionals with slant towards male in responsible position, wide ranging interests in politics, economy, international affairs, culture, high spenders, international travellers, modern, social class 1-3, liberal to left (scale of 5)

Bild der Wissenschaft — predominantly male scientists and professionals close to natural sciences. Specific interest to keep up to date in all natural sciences, highly educated readership, social class 1 and 2

Brigitte — young middle aged women concerned with fashion, dieting, healthy living, interested in moderate feminist issues, relatively high spenders, social climbers, social class 2 and 3, liberal

Neue Post older women, mainly interested in health and royalty, very conservative, low spenders, social class 4 and 5

Other magazines analysed in this fashion were for example Stern, the youth journal Bravo, the men's magazine der Mann, the TV and radio journal Hör Zu, the satirical Titanic, the glossy horseriding journal Reiter Revue and several others.

The students then chose sets of texts for close reading. One example of a mode contrast: Students collected where possible the marriage offers from the small ads, selecting those they considered most typical/untypical for the type of readership they had presumed for their magazine. Another stage was the selection of articles about topics the students were interested in for future reading. One text from Spiegel, a text on pollution and its effects became the starting point for a field based selection of materials about the environment including selections from some of the magazines, but also other available sources such as newspapers, posters, political pamphlets, records etc. So the papers now became a resource for different texts all on the environment. Examples were:

1. several articles mainly but not exclusively from the more serious magazines on the dying forest, lead-free petrol, health issues, epidemiological graphs, agriculture, the Green Party and several others. Only a few of these texts were later selected for close reading. But the fact that it was so easy to find further examples of the same topic and in very different types of journals was in itself a reflection of the level of attention to environmental issues prevalent amongst Germans today, and this made its impact on the students.

2. adverts chosen according to whether the students felt the products were good or bad for the environment.

3. leading away from the magazines as a source, texts were collected from every possible available source including some in their mother tongue. Typical texts chosen were songs, pamphlets from the Green Party and Greenpeace, but also extracts from radio and TV.

It should be clear by now that a strategy of selecting texts according to the criteria given and in collaboration with the students is an important device for activating all accessible knowledge about the text and its context. It is the process of search, collection, selection, and contrast itself which activates this knowledge without having to take recourse to lengthy background explanations.

It may seem paradoxical that students who are not yet very advanced in the foreign language can be asked to take part in such a selection procedure, since if they already understood what they are choosing there would be no need to teach them anything. But this is not really a paradox at all. Not understanding a text is very different from not being able to say if it may be good, important, interesting or to guess from situational cues what it is likely to comprise. A native speaker also decides whether or not to pursue a particular article, buy a book, watch a film on limited prior knowledge. Teaching students how to anticipate the kind of thing to be expected from a text without prior reading of anything but the most restricted few sentences is therefore one of the most important methodological devices at this stage, anticipating and supporting the more systematic predictions of strategy 2.

Predicting the text

Strategy No 2

At the beginning of this paper I briefly referred to the lack of predictability of the utterance. There is however a kind of predictability which is a function of the relationship between the social context of language and the text itself. Michael Halliday provides a most useful summary of these relationships:

> The linguistic system ...is organised in such a way that the social context is predictive of the text. This is what makes it possible for a member to make the necessary predictions about the meanings that are being exchanged in any situation which he encounters. If we drop in on a gathering, we are able to tune in very quickly, because we size up the field, tenor and mode of the situation and at once form an idea of what is likely to be

> meant. In this way we know what semantic configurations - what register - will probably be required if we are to take part. If we did not do this, there would be no communication ... We succeed in the exchange of meaning because we have access to the semiotic structure of the situation from other sources.
>
> (Halliday 1978, p 189)

This possibility of predicting from an awareness of field, tenor, and mode the types of meanings to be exchanged is the key to understanding. The learner must understand some but not all of the relationships between social context and language. This is a practical task aimed at the learner's need to recuperate a text outside the social context in which it originally occurred. Only those relations between social context and text which a non-native speaker can actively, easily and efficiently use to predict likely meanings in the text will be used. The fact that deeper relations exist is of no practical consequence. We do not ask: how are situational components realised in detail in the semantic configurations of the text? Instead we ask: assuming we understand the field, tenor and mode which gave rise to this particular text in front of us, what do we expect it to say and how? The focus is thus essentially a strategic one. Predicting the register in those areas of text realisation which the learners considered prior implies an activation of the prior knowledge of all three parameters. For example, if we chose a text in order to extract its information (field dominated) how much of its content can we predict by making use of our knowledge prior to the actual reading of that text? Or, how can a juxtaposition of texts of related topics but from different sources help us to predict elements of how the texts are linguistically organised. Again this is best illustrated by classroom examples.

Example 2: 'Janz Berlin is eene Wolke.' (Spiegel, 9, 1985, p88-96)

How a group of science students with a weak O Level/CSE standard of German had arrived at the choice of this particular text about pollution in Berlin was just explained. Their selection was not influenced by linguistic difficulty and length of the article, both of which by far exceeded their linguistic capacity, but by their interest in the topic (pollution) as well as their attraction to the source (Spiegel). None of the students thought it at all likely that they could be made to understand even

the most general gist of an article of such complexity. However, since the work was not their individual but a group responsibility they were prepared to go along with the tasks out of sheer curiosity.

Because of all the previous work with the magazines the text was not entirely new. The students knew a little bit about what sort of magazine the Spiegel is, had analysed its presumed readership, and they understood the position of the text inside the magazine. In other words they had some understanding of the tenor and mode of the text, and its environment from previous work. The question which was then to be answered in group work was: given you know text type, source, readership, and given your interest in the topic of pollution, which areas do you expect the text to cover. The prediction of what the text might say was aided by the group's evaluation of the easy clues which the text gave: pictures, headlines, subtitles.

The following information was gleaned in this way:

Picture 1	Pollution in Berlin is important election topic for all political parties, from the 'alternatives' to the conservatives
Picture 2	Pollution in Berlin causes illness
Picture 3	Pollution in Berlin is connected with pollution in the GDR
Picture 4	Politicians are wanting to show their interest in new ecological measures: the new petrol
Picture 5	Young people demonstrate against pollution in East and West
Picture 6	Factories as source of pollution
Picture 7	Demonstration against pollution through cars.

From this the students expected to find the following type of information in the text:

1. Smog/pollution. Details about causes in general, and in relation to Berlin in particular. Comparison to other cities. Unusual geographical and political position of Berlin. Involvement of the GDR.

2. Effects on health. Types of illnesses suspected to arise from pollution. Different opinions about relationship polution/health.

3. Reaction of the public, complaints, organised opposition: high profile of topic amongst general public.

4. Reactions of politicians. Importance of topic for all political parties. Question of who is to blame. Different directions of arguments according to political persuasion.

In very general terms these were the results of the initial predictions. Obviously they did not emerge in such a neatly organised fashion. Nor were they all restricted to topics. Given the awareness the students had acquired of the relationship between situational components and language both as a general phenomenon and a particular one as regards the Spiegel, they expected for example a certain bias in the way the topic would be covered, even before the juxtaposition of the Spiegel text with others on similar topics but from different sources had thematised such conclusions. They also assumed a critical stand to the arguments which within the text the politicians were likely to produce. It should be obvious at this stage of my argument that the distinction between field, tenor and mode cannot and need not be clear cut. Since the register of the text is determined by all three the students will become increasingly aware of the way a text reflects the tenor and mode dimensions, and will seize any opportunity to thus stand back from the text as a pure source of information.

Testing the predictions

The following strategies will only briefly be referred to:

Strategy No 3: checking the predictions against the text, and

Strategy No 4: isolating areas of the text which were not predicted or which were falsely predicted.

These subsequent stages consisted of checking whether any of the predicted topics did in effect occur, in which order, in which length. Also to see which parts of the article were not covered by these predictions. In groups of two the students divided the text up into paragraphs with subtitles. This information was later exchanged amongst the group and a preferred division was negotiated. Each group then tried to extract at least five key facts from one of the sections. This information was again pooled, and provided the grid for the gist reading of the text which the students did at home. The results were reported in the following session, and took the form of listing the most important information the text had provided. All students achieved a high level of comprehension of the key facts reported in the text, even though many details of the descriptions remained obscure. This, in contrast to the following article from Bild der Wissenschaft, was later established as a typical feature of reading Spiegel texts, especially Spiegel 'stories'. Students were prepared to tolerate the non-comprehension of whole sections (see for example the typical personalised introductions of all Spiegel stories) without any fear of losing the gist. On the other hand, the same methodological devices of predict - search - focus key points - gist read - summarise - used on a text of similar topic but different source enabled them to understand almost every part of the highly factual contrast article from Bild der Wissenschaft. The insights about text organisation, style, complexities of sentences, etc, gleaned from this juxtaposition of texts using tenor and mode rather than field criteria were in turn fed into the analysis. From this emerged not only an awareness of the different reading styles which different texts require, but also an awareness of the different ways with which a native speaker would approach such texts. Whereas students saw an overlap in their way of understanding the scientific Bild der Wissenschaft article with that of German readers, there was no such similarity in their reception of the Spiegel article. Although they could deduce from the comparison of different texts that the narrative structure and the language of a Spiegel story was geared to entertain, sensationalise, provide responses from its readers, they could not themselves turn into such readers.

Only after a meta-assessment of how texts present meaning could responses be elicited which were comparable to those of an analyst rather than a reader of Spiegel stories. In other words, although no identification is implied between a linguist and a language learner, the latter does require an analytic response which is different from the one the native speaker/reader is likely to have. By definition the foreign language learner needs the double perspective of placing on the one hand what the text sets out to do, and on the other, understanding what it means to them. Initially an understanding of the text has to take place in the only terms which the learner has available, ie an engagement with a text alienated from its social base. The learner's reasons for choosing to understand a particular text may therefore be very different from the way the implied reader is encoded in the text. S/he needs a metaposition in order to differentiate the outsider from the insider view.

Contrasting the knowledge which the learner has consciously acquired about the text with the response a native reader is likely to have or is meant to have is thus a vital aspect of comprehending discourse outside its natural setting. It is also part of education in general. It means for example learning how to resist the invitation of a manipulative text (an advert for example) as a result of the understanding that there is such an invitation encoded in the text. This is a semiotic process, where learning a language and learning about a language becomes impossible to separate: a making conscious of what native speakers do - largely unconsciously. But it is done practically, project based, as guided discovery by the students themselves in and through the medium of the foreign language.

Juxtaposing texts

The example just presented was to highlight how large topical units of a text could be predicted by the students through an activation of their knowledge of field, tenor and mode dimensions of the text. It was also to show how through deliberate juxtaposition with other texts an awareness was developed of how any one of those texts could most easily be read or understood. Gist reading, that is reading for information, is made very much easier if students are actively aware of how tenor and mode dimensions influence the language of the text. Other examples with can only be hinted at here would show how a juxtaposition of two texts of similar topic and type of medium but contrasting readership can help

isolate linguistic features which influence the readers' response to these texts. So the model can be activated not only in relation to propositional knowledge but also in the predicting and understanding of attitudes presupposed and reinforced by the text. Comparing two articles on the same topic from two similar types of German newspapers enabled the students not only to extract the relevant information but also to direct their attention to exactly those micro features of language which would influence a reader's assessment of that information. (Such a comparative task is illustrated in a textbook by Meinhof & Rach, 1981, pp28-29.) Students through a foreign language thus develop insights about evaluation through language without any theoretical exposition, but purely through a method of self-discovery. That bias is not necessarily residing in deliberately false information but can be hidden behind connotations of verbs, qualifiers, conjunctions, different positioning of information is an important discovery not just about the foreign language, but also about one's mother tongue. Learning a language and learning about language is thus again combined in one consistent teaching unit.

The deliberate juxtaposition of texts, where one of the situational parameters for field, tenor and mode is contrasted whilst the other two are held constant is both a result of the prediction of likely meanings and part of the methodology of discourse comprehension. Without some prediction as to what a text is likely to comprise no juxtaposition is possible. But without juxtaposition, taken only as separate text, there is no guide as to how to locate or evaluate key phrases which direct a reader's reception of the information. This last point applies of course to a large extent to native speakers, too, who are not usually able to detect by which linguistic means they are led to believe certain items of information. The strategies of comprehending and assessing texts through deliberate contrastive reading should thus not be restricted to the foreign language.

This paper has shown how through an activation of students' knowledge of the situational parameters of field, tenor and mode certain aspects of the texts could be predicted. This process of activating prior knowledge was a direct result of an approach which laid bare the reasons for the choice of these texts in the first place. By allowing the students to take part in the selection process, prior knowledge was maximised. This also

minimised the possibility of bypassing their interest whilst at the same time the unavoidable preselection of possible text sources by the teacher (TV programmes, newspapers, magazines, books, pictures, etc) ensured the link with the sociocultural teaching goals. This combination of maximum topical interest on the side of the students in the chosen texts with a maximum knowledge of situational parameters allowed the formulation of predictions to be brought to the text before actually beginning with the detailed reading. As was shown in the examples, the predictions formed the basis of sets of divergent and effective comprehension strategies.

Cognitive parallels

These strategies are of course of a pedagogical nature. They are pretheoretical in the sense that their success was shown in the methodology of enabling the students to comprehend original texts where the linguistic level would otherwise have been prohibitive. They do not claim to represent a cognitive theory of discourse comprehension in general, though there are tantalising similarities to the strategic comprehension of discourse at macrostructural level as postulated by van Dijk and W Kintsch. Their recent study Strategies of Discourse Comprehension (1983) replaces earlier structural models of discourse understanding by a strategic one. Comprehension is seen as dynamic and process-oriented, which takes place 'on line', that is gradually together with the processing of input, and not with hindsight, after all input data have been assembled (p5). This processing is multilevel, integrating the 'comprehender's existing world knowledge with the information derived from the text that is being processed' (x). However although large amounts of knowledge are activated in the process of comprehension, this activation, too is strategic.

> 'Instead of a more or less blind activation of all possible knowledge, in the understanding of a word, a clause, or the construction of a global theme, we assume that the use of knowledge is strategic, depending on the goals of the language user, the amounts of available knowledge from text and context ...' (p13)

The strategies which are used by the comprehender are thus flexible, adjustable according to task and interest. They are strategies of the cognitive system and as such largely unconscious, often automatic. But they have all been learned. Some of these are learned very early, hand in hand with the process of language acquisition by the child (ie word and clause comprehension). Others, especially macrostrategies such as gist reading, and schematic strategies such as, for example, the understanding of the structure of a particular narrative form are acquired late or need specialist training. It is these latter strategies, the macro and schematic strategies which coincide in their theoretical formulation with my pedagogic strategies.

Such a coincidence may have significant consequences for foreign language teaching in general:

1. If the ability to formulate macrostrategies and thus establish global coherence of discourse is an essential element of comprehension, then this would have to include the comprehension of discourse in a foreign language. It should be obvious that the foreign language learner in an average classroom, confronted with either pedagogic texts or isolated originals would be incapable of forming any hypothesis about the discourse in front of them. None of the requirements which enable contextual searches are there at all, because of the way discourse is either adapted, selected, or represented for teaching purposes. But equally, the purely textual strategies are undervalued because of the way discourse is normally presented and approached.

2. If comprehension is a result of the establishment of both global and local coherence it requires the ability to isolate propositions in the discourse on all levels from the sentence to the discourse as a whole through the integration of all possible knowledge available, including 'world knowledge'. If the knowledge is restricted because of the isolation of the text from its normal setting students will rely on lexicogrammatical knowledge as their only key to the text. Because of the limitations of lexicogrammatical knowledge in the foreign

language reading for meaning is impaired even at the local level.

3. Comprehension strategies can work on partial knowledge if all possible knowledge is activated before and during the processing of the discourse. The methodology of text selection which was the condition for the formulation of pedagogic strategies of text prediction and verification can thus be seen as a frame for activating cognitive knowledge. But instead of these processes taking place on an unconscious even automatic level as in the understanding of native discourse, my model provides a conscious, actively learnable correlate for the comprehension of non-native discourse.

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PLAYING SAFE WITH PREDICTIONS: HEDGING, ATTRIBUTION AND CONDITIONS IN ECONOMIC FORECASTING

Pindi Makaya and Thomas Bloor
Aston University

Introduction

In the last few years, linguists have addressed themselves increasingly to the way in which speakers or writers modify their commitment to the propositional content of their utterances. Stubbs (1986:1), calling for 'prolonged fieldwork' in the area of modality in English, brings together a wide range of phenomena by means of which 'whenever speakers (or writers) say anything, they encode their point of view towards it'. Holmes, speaking at an earlier BAAL conference, observed that

> 'contents of debate and discussion, speculation and hypothesis, for instance, are rich in lexical items functioning to express the speaker's confidence or reservation concerning the validity of the information asserted.' (Holmes 1983:106)

In the ESP field, a number of writers, building on Lakoff's seminal paper on 'hedging', have examined the occurrence of 'words whose job is to make things fuzzier or less fuzzy' (Lakoff 1973). Prince et al (1982), in a somewhat prescriptive vein, report on the occurrence of these phenomena in professional discussions among physicians. Rounds (1981) points out the positive aspects of 'hedging' and indicates its importance in the learning of English for academic purposes, an approach echoed by Skelton (1986), who adds proposals for appropriate testing strategies.

A point frequently made in the discussion of academic writing, particularly of journal articles, is that authors need to be cautious in their claims, and it is a common weakness of inexperienced writers, in particular non-native speakers, to fail to modulate their utterances appropriately. To quote Rounds:

'A researcher's reputation is made or broken on the basis of his publications, therefore he must be very careful how he states his claims.' (Rounds 1982:1)

In this paper, we consider not academic research literature but economic reports, and in particular the forecasts which are the key features of these reports. It is not difficult to believe that Rounds' observation about scientific researchers applies with a vengeance to those in the business of making economic predictions. There are differences, the main one being that the authors of economic reports are anonymous, but the fact that their predictions are intended to be used as a basis for action by their readers means that the writer who too rashly commits him/herself would quickly lose more than reputation. Here it is the reporting body (Abecor, Barclays, EIU or OECD) whose reputation is at stake, and the writers and editors whose job it is to maintain that reputation.

In some ways, economics forecasts resemble weather forecasts or, for that matter, high quality horoscopes. They describe what has been going on recently; they offer some reasons for what is going to happen, they tell you what is going to happen. The difference is that the astrological fortune teller is expected to take a few chances. No one wants to be told that she might meet a dark stranger but then again she might not, whereas such ambivalence is the stock in trade of economists as it is of weather forecasting.

Economics forecasters have three ways of modifying their commitment to a prediction. These are:

by HEDGING

for example, using modal verbs may, might, could; other lexical items such as possibly, perhaps, probably, conceivably; possible, likely, probable; suggest, seem, appear; etc

by ATTRIBUTION

eg 1. The Minister of Finance expects a Federal Government net borrowing requirement of below DM30 billion (OECD 1984)

2. According to the most recent forecasts, the deficit as a percentage of net national income will decrease from 11.5% in 1983 to 10.7% in 1984 (IR Netherlands 1984)

by SPECIFYING CONDITIONS

eg 3. At the time of writing US prime rates are down to 11.5 per cent and will go lower still if the Federal Reserve Board ignores its monetary targets and cuts its discount rate again (WCO 1983)

Any two or all three strategies can be exploited simultaneously, and frequently are. For example, sentence 4 combines modal verb hedging (might) with conditional qualification.

4. If the dollar were to fall, contrary to the technical assumption, the forecast for real output might also be lower (OECD 1984)

There is an additional, more subtle distancing effect in the reference to 'forecast for the output' being lower, rather than the output itself, but, apart from noting it, we will not discuss this further. We will come back to the phrase 'contrary to the technical assumption' later.

Plain predictions

It is difficult to find in the data examples of what might be called 'plain predictions' comparable to the confident assertion of sentences 5 or 6 (from a journalist astrologer)[1]:

5. Friends will be your strength this month, offering advice and forceful pushes.

6. Your workload will lighten after the autumn when you will reap the benefit of your labours. Friends organise a lovely surprise for you on the 6th, which includes those closest to you.

(ESP exercise: Rewrite the above to provide adequate cover for the clairvoyant.)

Of course, an element of doubt is built into almost any proposition involving the future. Palmer (1979:53) is unusually confusing on the role of the modal verb will, which is reasonable evidence that it is a tricky question:

> 'The situation with will is rather less clear. Will may be used epistemically to refer to future events, but if it is so used it is very difficult to distinguish from the use of will simply to refer to the future... Indeed, it has been argued that, conversely the WILL of futurity is, in fact, epistemic WILL.'

Stubbs (op cit:16) mentions the use of present simple to convey 'future states of affairs which are predictable, possibly because they are part of some scheme', but such usage is not relevant to our data and Stubbs says nothing on will. For our purposes, an unhedged, unqualified, unattributed assertion with will is a prediction without an escape hatch, and it is understandable that examples are hard to find in our data.

But although the motivation for caution is clear enough, it may be that culture plays a part in this. There is a widespread folk-linguistic belief that English speakers (or perhaps the British) are systematically more tentative or indirect than speakers of many other languages, and this view is to some extent supported by cross-cultural research into politeness (eg Blum-Kulka and Olshtain 1984, Thomas 1983, Littlewood 1983. But for evidence of a discrepancy in the opposite direction between English speakers and others, see eg Tannen 1984, Loveday 1982). We have only anecdotal evidence that English language reports are more tentative than some others but there are suggested implications for ESP teaching here, and for contrastive studies. The specialist informant (see Selinker 1979 for the use of specialist informants) comments:

> 'When we get reports from the Germans for instance they say they will do this they will do that ... we soften all that.'

An unqualified assertion with will introduced by a performative such as predict or forecast (as in the first part of 7) clearly amounts to a plain prediction.

7. By the end of June 1983, we forecast that the LME price will have reached £1050 per ton, and we expect it to be £1150 by the year end, with the annual average in the region of £1050 (WCO 1983)

It is not entirely clear, however, whether the second clause, introduced by we expect, is hedged or not. Expect could be described as a fuzzy hedge. An author could perhaps argue: 'We didn't say that the price would be £1150; we only said we expected it to be £1150', but in the uncertain world of predictions, we expect is near enough to total commitment to count as a plain forecast.

Hedging and attribution

Hedging and attribution overlap when we find impersonal constructions such as It is expected. as anticipated, etc, as in sentence 8.

8. Growth is now expected to pick up a little in 1985 in both countries, reversing the downward distortion in this year's figure, but to remain generally modest at around 3% (IFS 1984)

Of course, a little and generally are typical hedges (to say nothing of the vagueness of the adjective modest), but they fall into the class which Price et al (op cit) classify as Approximators, whereas we are at present interested in Shields. The question is do we attribute the expectation to the author or not? This is an instance of the well known use of the passive without agent to evade responsibility, and yet, once again, in the event of subsequent economic developments drastically at odds with the forecast, this lack of specificity would be a poor defence. Sentence 8 can be read as an expression of authorial expectation and, given the lack of further comments, the Co-operative Principle (Grice 1975) tends to come down against the interpretation:

p is expected by some people but not by us.

But, even if we take a hard line and include impersonal structures as plain forecasts, the frequency of plain forecasts remains very low.

Where an attribution is specifically to a source other than the body producing the report, there is a clear escape from responsibility for the prediction, though as Al-Shabab and Bloor (1986) show (see also Stubbs op cit) the status of the attributee can be a significant factor in author commitment. In economics forecasting, attributed predictions are always identified with responsible sources in our appropriate context: the Exchequer, the International Energy Agency, the Australian Wool Corporation chairman. Sometimes the attribution is more general: for example, 'forecasts', 'projections', 'official forecasts' etc. Stubbs (op cit) observes that the mere fact of reporting an assertion confers some degree of credibility on it, on the 'no smoke without fire' principle, and it does seem reasonable for readers of economic reports to interpret attributed predictions as at least partially endorsed by the reporting body, even when the attributee is fairly non-specific, except when the report explicitly disassociates itself from the prediction.

Conditionals

Conditionals are not normally regarded as hedges although they resemble hedges in that, to use Skelton's (op cit) terminology, they comment on the main proposition.[2] Sometimes, a conditional is indisputably a kind of hedge, for example, in common expressions of the type if I'm not mistaken, if my old eyes don't deceive me, unless my memory plays me false. These expressions have no exact counterparts in economic reports though there is a superficial resemblance in such formulations as If we are right in believing that p ..., If p, as we anticipate ... The difference is that in the conversational cases, the condition simply means I could be wrong but I believe that p ... whereas all instances of this type in the economic forecasting data include a substantive condition external to the main prediction.

In fact, the force of this type of expression in economic forecasting, far from casting doubt on the main proposition, is to provide support for it. Thus example 10 differs from example 9 in that it contains an element of authorial support for the condition, ie it is an embedded prediction that the condition will be realised, a point on which 9 is neutral.

> 9. If the public sector borrowing requirement does not exceed the ceiling set by the authorities, total credit growth could be

reduced to 17.5 per cent in 1984, from 21 per cent in 1983. (OECD 1984)

10. If, as we anticipate, the strike is not extended, prices will rise only slowly in the final quarter. (WCO 1983)

In spite of the superficial difference in realisation, 10 closely resembles 11 in its logical structure.

11. However, our central view that there will be a rebound in both the monetary aggregates and in economic activity towards the end of the year and in early 1985 has been reinforced by the fall in interest rates. If this view is borne out, market expectations of fed policy will probably be reversed again and period rates would be back on an upward trend. (IFS 1984)

Both extracts contain a prediction, a condition for fulfilment of the prediction and a prediction that the condition will be met. 10 could be paraphrased as 10a.

10a Our view is that the strike will not be extended. If this view is borne out, prices will rise only slowly in the final quarter.

(There is an adverbial hedge - probably - in 11, which is lacking in 10, but this is not material to our present concerns. There is also an odd switch from will to would in 11: a performance error, perhaps, but probably triggered by the overwhelming concern for modality.) 10 and 11 have, give or take a few modal features, something of the form of a classical syllogism:

if p then q

p

therefore q

whereas example 9 simply has the form

if p then q [3]

Thus, other factors being equal[4], predictions like 10 and 11 (with author-supported conditionals) are more committed than those like 9, which lack any comment on the likelihood of the condition being met.

Sentence 4, discussed briefly earlier in the paper, is an example of a similar device used to contrasting effect. Here the counterpart to "as we anticipate" in 10 is "contrary to the technical assumption". Thus, the condition is marked as unlikely to be fulfilled, with obvious implications for the prediction, which is nevertheless hedged (as mentioned earlier) by the modal might. The intricacy of hedge and counter-hedge is well illustrated in this sentence for the phrase "contrary to the technical assumption" is itself somewhat hedged by the impersonal attribution effect of the nominalisation "assumption" (not "we assume" so whose assumption is it?) but the adjective "technical" seems to confer some credibility on the assumption.

In ordinary language, it is not always clear whether a condition is both necessary and sufficient or merely sufficient, a distinction which logicians make by using the expression iff (if and only if) for the former. Only if sometimes occurs in our data to signal necessary conditions (though the ambiguity remains with sentences using a simple if. Sentence 12 is an example of such an expression:

> 12. Therefore, a fall in Dutch money rates or the dollar can be affected only if US interest rates fall further or the dollar starts its long-awaited downtrend. (IR Netherlands 1984)

Unlike the conditions in examples 9, 10 and 11 (which may or may not be necessary), the condition in 12 is clearly marked as an absolute prerequisite for the fulfilment of the prediction.

This contrasts with conditions of the type seen in 13, where the condition is clearly not a prerequisite but would enhance the chances of fulfilment.

> 13. From their present level of around 11%, some further modest easing in long term rates is possible especially if the election result leads to a further strengthening of the exchange rate. (IR, UK 1983)

We might call this a reinforcing condition since the validity of the prediction is clearly not subject to the condition being met, but would be strengthened if it should be met.

14 is an example of what might be called the antithetical condition.

> 14. Because of this, the Belgian franc may see its position strengthen somewhat against the D-mark, thus allowing some reduction in the excessively high 5-6 point interest rate differential. However, there would be little scope for a decline in short term rates if eurodollar rates were to rise further. (IR Belgium 1984)

Here a prediction is made, but with the proviso that its fulfilment will be blocked or at least made more difficult, by the given condition.

But unfavourable conditions can be exploited by the author as a means of stressing the strength of the prediction, as in 15.

> 15. Even if some deterioration in the payments position occurs, the Treasury will have no difficulty in the next few months in financing its deficit in the capital market. (IR Italy 1984)

Clauses of this type are classified by Quirk et al (1972) as conditional-concessive: we might label this, then, as a concessive condition. The message here is one of confidence in the prediction such that it will survive foreseeable unfavourable conditions.

Thus, to sum up the conditions in terms of the relation between the prediction and the condition, we have:

A. The sufficient condition, where the fulfilment of the prediction follows from the realisation of the condition but could result from other conditions (typically if p)

B. The necessary condition, where the fulfilment of the prediction needs the condition to be met (typically only if p)

C. The enhancing condition, where the realisation of the condition would increase the chances of the prediction's fulfilment, but is not necessary for it (typically especially if p)

D. The concessive condition, where the realisation of the condition would fail to block the prediction notwithstanding its contrary force (typically even if p)

E. The antithetical condition, where the condition is sufficient to cancel the prediction.

Some commonly occurring structures that look like conditionals turn out not to be so. For example, if at all in 16 has the meaning "and probably not p"

> 16. With total bank lending unlikely to accelerate sufficiently, if at all, the sterling M3 money supply should be met without difficulty. (UK FS 1984)

There is, however, a hidden conditional here which has nothing to do with the if-expression. 16 could be paraphrased by 16a.

> 16a Total bank lending is unlikely to accelerate sufficiently (and will probably not accelerate at all). If this is true, the sterling M3 money supply should be met without difficulty.

Thus 16 can be seen to resemble 10 and 11, with a somewhat syllogistic logical form: if p then probably q; (probably) p; therefore (probably) q (*pace* Aristotle).

An even more deceptive realisation is found in 17, where the if-clause contains the prediction, and the main clause, in effect, expresses the condition.

> 17. A rise in the Deutschmark may require continued tight monetary policies in these countries if depreciation-induced inflation is to be avoided. (OECD 1984)

We could conceivably paraphrase this as 17a.

17a If there is a rise in the Deutschmark, tight monetary policies in these countries may require to be continued. If tight monetary policies are continued, inflation can be avoided.

Less controversially, the underlined section of example 18 can be paraphrased as 18a.

18. Mill use will probably decline again in Western Europe since, despite an aggressive policy to curb textile imports, import penetration is likely to continue, albeit at a reduced rate, and if there is a recovery of economic growth it will be weak, under 2 per cent. (WCO 1093)

18a i) Mill use will probably decline again in Western Europe

ii) if import penetration continues

iii) and we predict that import penetration will continue.

The second prediction 18, in spite of its grammatical realisation, is not a conditional at all in our sense but a hedge of the if-any type and can be paraphrased as 18b.

18b A recovery of economic growth will be weak, under 2 per cent, and there may be no recovery at all.

Another example of a hidden conditional is 19.

19. Any easing of American short-term rates together with a continuing strong position of the guilder, within the EMS, owing to the favourable development of the current account, will put downward pressure on Dutch money market rates in the coming months. (IR Netherlands 1983)

Here the subject-NP "any easing of American short-term rates" conveys the conditional meaning "If there is an easing of American short-term rates" ("any" here having the force of "hypothetical".)

Applications

Advanced ESP students of economics are likely to have difficulty in grasping the subtleties of the qualification placed on prediction. As already mentioned, there is evidence that ESP writing is frequently weak in the area of modality (Stubbs, Rounds, Skelton, op cit, our specialist informant), the tendency being to make claims which strike native speaker experts as too sweeping or lacking in academic caution. It is plausible that the limitations thus manifest in writing at least partially reflect a failure to perceive the force of such 'commenting' elements in reading materials. Whether the requirement to be tentative in predicting is a universal or a culturally determined phenomenon, it is clear that the realisation of tentativeness takes complex and subtle forms. This paper has presented only a glimpse of this complexity and subtlety.

It is probable that even native speakers have to learn to handle these phenomena effectively in written texts since, even though they exist in spoken language and are to that extent naturally required, skill in exploiting them improves perceptibly with tuition. (See Bloor 1984 for the distinction between 'skills acquired naturally' and 'skills taught in the education system'.)

Since forecasting is such an important part of economics activity outside the academic arena, a clear understanding of its form and function is of importance for teachers responsible for training ESP students working in the economics field, as well as those concerned with communications for native speaker economists. Since, as Stubbs observes (op cit:21), 'We do not have even the simplest taxonomic descriptive information' for many of these phenomena, there is still a role for descriptive analysis. By means of what has now become the standard ESP methodology (see Bloor and Bloor, 1986), students can be not only exposed to appropriate authentic texts, but also be given the 'systems-support' (Edge and Samuda 1981) which focuses on the aspects of the text most likely to present problems, or, to put it more positively, most likely to yield useful results.

Notes

1. Marjorie Orr 'Star Options' in Options magazine, August 1986, pp 163-164

2. This terminology is potentially misleading here as the 'comment' may itself take the form of a proposition.

3. It must be understood that this is an analogy. The utterance is not strictly a syllogism. We also assume that p and q may have optional negativity and recursive properties.

4. We have in mind such factors as attribution, lexical hedges and the inherent likelihood of the conditions being met.

Key to data sources

OECD	OECD Economic Outlook (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development)
IR	ABECOR country reports (Association of European Banks)
WCO	World Commodity Outlook 1983 (Economist Intelligence Unit)
IFS	International Financial Surveys (Barclays Bank)
UK-FS	United Kingdom Financial Surveys (Barclays Bank)
IES	International Economic Surveys (Barclays Bank)

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PREDICTIVE ITEMS IN STUDENT WRITING

Teresa O'Brien
University of Manchester

This is very much a working paper. It recounts an attempt to find measures to answer the question: do students perform linguistically differently when writing under examination conditions than when writing term essays. The attempt centred on the types of prediction identified by Tadros in her monograph Prediction in Text (1985) and in the thesis (1981) that underlies that monograph. The paper will show that only some of the Tadros types are used by the students in my sample and that so far they have not proved to be a reliable measure of difference. It will conclude with a suggestion for further enquiry in this area.

Many students think that their linguistic performance deteriorates in examination conditions and that this makes a difference to their grade. On the other hand, many lecturers of content subjects, including the psychology lecturers who taught the 3rd year undergraduate students in my sample, claim that they take no notice of how an examination answer is written and mark only for content. The purpose of this piece of research is, then, to discover whether there is in fact a relationship between linguistic performance and grading. For that reason the analysis of essays and examination papers is being carried out in ignorance of the students' grades, although I do know that my sample includes students who obtained Upper and Lower Seconds. This is interesting in the light of comments made in a questionnaire by newly graduated PGCE students in the Faculty of Education at Manchester. Several of those who felt that their examination performance had been linguistically poor remarked that they felt it had made the difference between an Upper and a Lower Second.

In the final stages of the research a quantitative content assessment (performed with the help of the psychology staff who taught the students) must be set beside linguistic measures. A useful guide to relevant measures has come from the PGCE students mentioned above. Students reported feeling anxiety about two particular aspects of their linguistic

performance: style and organisation. Working on the hypothesis that examination writing is likely to be closer to students' own thought processes and possibly be rather less formal in style than their essay writing, I have isolated a number of stylistic features within the sentence that will, I hope, be useful (O'Brien 1987). The present paper records a first attempt at finding a way of measuring organisational features or performance beyond the sentence.

Because the research is very much concerned with the relationship between writing, reading and grading, I have been drawn to discourse analysts who are interested in written text as a manifestation of a dialogue between writer and reader.

Hoey's On the surface of discourse (1983) seemed to offer leads. Like Winter's work (1977, 1982) it concentrates on the 'clause relation' which Winter defines as:

> 'the cognitive process whereby we interpret the meaning of a sentence or group of sentences in the light of its adjoining sentence or group of sentences'.

The importance of the notion of interpretation here interested me. Perhaps what I should look for was evidence of considerateness on the part of the writer towards the reader, enabling a relatively trouble-free interpretation. Surely there was more time to be considerate when writing the essay and inconsiderateness could be more easily forgiven in an examination. This considerateness would manifest itself in a careful choice, albeit only partially conscious, of clause relations. Working from the notion that what is wanted is a piece of writing that is easy to read and that clear clause relations would serve that end, I began to investigate further.

Winter and Hoey both work with three categories of clause-relating signals: subordinators, sentence connectors and certain lexical items which Winter has termed Vocabulary 3 (Winter 1977). These are lexical items of connection, such as: *differ, grounds, instance*. Winter names 108 items which have both a closed-system and an open-system meaning. The closed-system meaning relates to their anticipatory power. They can anticipate the coming clause relation, they set up an expectation of a

realisation. If someone writes 'Countries differ in their approaches to language planning' we predict that the following clause will tell us how they differ.

Winter and Hoey have also worked on techniques to clarify clause relations that are not signalled; one of them is that of asking questions. For example:

> Certainly there is little doubt that generally females are better 'decoders' or 'receivers' of non-verbal cues of emotion than males. Hall (1978) carried out an extensive review of the literature, analysing results from 75 studies. These studies provide strong support for a female advantage in decoding non-verbal communication of emotion. 68% of the studies reviewed reported this effect.

There is no overt signal of relationship between the last two sentences although the sequence of one sentence after another leads us to expect some kind of relationship. But if we ask the question 'How do the studies provide strong support?' or 'What is this strong support?', we can see that there is a relationship that we could perhaps label Claim-Evidence. We could further clarify the relationship by using another of the techniques: paraphrase.

These studies provide strong support ...as 68% of them reported this effect.

The fact that we can paraphrase using 'as' supports the Claim-Evidence label. We see this relationship characterised by the questions 'How can you say that?' or 'Why do you say that?'.

As Hoey has pointed out, interacting with the text does not necessarily mean that the reader actually asks questions, although that may be the case. The idea is that on the basis of certain expectations, which may or may not exist in the mind as questions, and on the basis of what the writer has already said, a reader makes guesses about the content to come and its relationship to what has preceded.

In reality lecturers may scan-read for points and skim for general organisation and linkage but it is difficult to imagine a reading process that does not include the use of predictive skills. As one of the things I am trying to explain is the students' intuitions that they are writing less well in examinations, it seemed worthwhile to investigate whether there is any basis for their feelings in the way that they have organised their text. One obvious way to help and guide a reader through a text, for example, is to use predictive items which are subsequently satisfactorily followed up.

Angele Tadros' work appeared to offer a framework. In it she describes and tightly defines six types of prediction that she discovered to be frequent in an economics textbook. She chose this as her corpus because her research was stimulated by an interest in helping her Sudanese students to read their textbooks more successfully. It is important to remember that the corpus was written by a practised, published writer for a pedagogic purpose. Tadros herself warns that the categories she outlines will not be found in every type of text.

By prediction, it should be pointed out, Tadros means a commitment at one point in the text to the occurrence of another subsequent linguistic event. This she distinguishes from anticipation, the situation in which the reader guesses what the writer will do based on a mixture of knowledge of the world, the topic, language and the conventions of the text.

The six categories are these:

1. Enumeration
2. Advance Labelling
3. Reporting
4. Recapitulation
5. Hypotheticality
6. Question

I was particularly interested in Reporting and Hypotheticality as these were singled out by Tadros as signals of detachment and, as she says in her thesis, 'Teachers and examiners, for instance, would not give credit to any student who simply reports what others say, think, believe, assert or claim, because they are interested in what the student thinks about what he is reporting. Of course, the student's opinions may coincide with those

of others but this has to be signalled'. As well as helping me identify instances of prediction, these would help me to identify detachment.

Since this was an exploratory exercise, I chose from my total sample of twenty, five essays and five examination answers by the same five students. Their special subject was social psychology. Two students wrote their term essay on the following:

A1 Examine the evidence concerning individual differences in the non-verbal encoding and decoding of emotion

and then answered this examination question:

A2 Evaluate the contention that deception can be detected reliably by means of non-verbal cues.

The other three wrote their term essay on the following:

B1 Evaluate the role played by facial expression in the experience of emotion

and answered this examination question:

B2 Discuss the problems that arise in attempting to test the 'facial feedback' hypothesis. To what extent can these problems be overcome?

The essays and examination questions deal essentially with the same content, this being an important part of the research design. The discourse acts that are required: examine, evaluate, discuss, are unfortunately not matched. This problem is not relevant for our present purpose but will be taken into account in the final analysis.

The investigation began with Enumeration. Tadros claims that there are three criteria for the predictive member of a pair of this type and each of these criteria is both a sufficient and a necessary condition for classification as Enumeration.

1. Where a structure has

   either

   (a) a plural subject followed by a verb which demands a complement followed by a colon; eg The conditions are:

   or

   (b) a free clause followed by a clause binder only; eg This is possible under conditions when:

2. Where a sentence includes a cataphoric textual place reference item such as 'the following' or 'as follows' in association with a plural noun

3. Where a sentence includes a numeral, exact or inexact, and an Enumerable (subtechnical nouns, eg 'advantages' and discourse self-reference nouns, eg 'definitions'), provided the information is presented as new to the context.

This proved to be the most productive of the categories for my data, although I should say here that I have included instances where prediction and fulfilment occur in the same sentence, separated only by a comma, whereas Tadros recognises only pairs separated by a full stop, a question mark, a dash or a colon. Table 1 shows the number of instances found in each subgroup.

A comment should be made on the nature of the texts and whether they included suitable candidates for enumeration. As all the answers involved discussion of experiments performed within various theoretical frameworks, candidates for enumeration were theories and theorists, experiments and experimenters, conditions within experiments, results, problems and criticisms. There was indeed ample scope for enumeration.

If we refer to table 1, we note that student 5 has used this device rather more than the other students. Furthermore this student is the only one to

have actually used enumeration to organise the main body of the essay, with local enumerations embedded within the global.

Table 1

S.1	Essay Exam	3 2	1P
S.2	Essay Exam	2 0	1 bn 1 bn
S.3	Essay Exam	1 2	1 P
S.4	Essay Exam	2 1	
S.5	Essay Exam	4 5	

At first sight it would not appear to be the case that students enumerate less in examination conditions. At least two (3 and 5) have actually enumerated more, especially if we bear in mind that the essays are about 2000 words long and the examination answers only between 500 and 700 words.

If, however, we divide the students according to the general impression that their writing makes (and here the help of other raters was enlisted) we find that the weaker students do in fact enumerate, ie organise for themselves and for a potential reader, less in their examination answers. In the first subgroup S2 is rated lower than S1 and in the second subgroup S4 is rated lower than the other two students. In addition S2 has an instance under both conditions where one could argue that enumeration is badly needed. Here is the example from the essay, the less forgivable case:

> In all experiments, subjects were asked to judge non verbal expressive stimuli such as face, body or vocal cues presented in drawings, photos, film, content standard speech - whereby the speaker recites meaningless or affectively ambiguous material, varying his expressions to suit the intended emotion; randomised spliced speech - such that the audiotape is cut and reassembled into scrambled speech; and electronically filtered speech - in which electronic filtering removes the critical band frequencies so that the voice sounds muffled and the words unintelligible.

A possible comment here is that the sentence is too long. (Indeed this student often writes overlong sentences.) Shorter sentences alone, however, would not improve the readability whereas some form of signalling, enumeration, for example, would. The same student in the examination writes this sentence:

> Thus DePaulo and Rosenthal (1979) designed an experiment in which senders were *either* asked to express *dislike* for someone they did actually dislike - that is, underlying and sent affect are both negative; *benevolence* for someone they truthfully liked - that is, underlying and sent affect are both positive; *pretend* to like someone they actually dislike (that is, underlying affect - negative, sent affect - positive) and *pretend* to dislike someone they really liked (that is, underlying affect - positive, sent affect - negative).

This example is interesting for two reasons. Firstly, the signal for alternativity, *either*, is misused: there are in fact four, not two conditions and the obligatory *or* of the second member is missing. Secondly, and most importantly for our present purpose, an attempt at ellipsis fails. The sentence requires that we supply something from the preceding grammatical environment in order to understand the two instances of *pretend*. When we look back we find that for the second condition, *benevolence*, ellipsis involves replacing 'senders were asked to express'. This replacement will not work, however, with *pretend*. Here the ellipsis needed is 'senders were asked to'. Had the student used enumeration, this difficulty for the reader might have been avoided. It is interesting to compare the parallel passage from S1's examination answer:

For example, in a study by Rosenthal and DePaulo (1979) subjects were asked to:

(a) describe somebody they like truthfully (L)
(b) describe somebody they didn't like truthfully (D)
(c) describe somebody they liked as though they didn't like her (LD)
(d) describe somebody they didn't like as though they did (DL).

This example and reflection on table 1 perhaps suggest an alternative hypothesis: that we might in fact expect more enumeration in the examination since students are quite likely to learn sets of information from notes which are numbered, although, of course, they will not necessarily set them down in that form. In fact if we include 'possible' instances and bear in mind the relative brevity of the examination pieces, we see that this is true in three out of five cases. A 'possible' instance is one which does not conform strictly to the Tadros criteria but which, nevertheless, presents itself as organised and has some predictive and predicted markers. Here is the example from S1's examination answer. it is reproduced complete with signs of examination pressure.

> Rosenthal and DePaulo in the study described above report individual differences in the detection of deception. firstly no reliable sex differences were found. Generally females are superior at both encoding + decoding the non-verbal communication of emotion, but they lose this advantage the leakier a channel becomes (Rosenthal + DePaulo, 1979). The detection of deception seems to be most accurate with the leakier channels eg body, tone of voice. So this finding is consistent with other literature.
>
> They found that good liars are generally good all-round liars ie the tendancy to get away with lying in the DL condition was related to the ability to lie in the LD condition. The same is not true, however, on the detection of deception the ability to detect deception in one condition is not related to the ability to detect deception in another. The reverse of this appears to be true for leakage ie sending ability not related, but detect related.

As a lay reader, I was not quite sure how many individual differences were being reported. There is, however, a qualitative difference between this extract and those from S2 quoted above. In this case one feels that the student is in fact enumerating mentally if not graphically and that the informed tutor-reader would have little difficulty in following the text and judging the extent of the student's knowledge and understanding. The local cohesion is, in fact, very tight. Indeed we seem to have here a good example of the shared-knowledge principle in operation, a principle that one suspects has to be used rather more in the examination than in the essay.

There are, then, perhaps three indications here for further investigation: firstly, that where a student has used enumeration as an important organising principle in the essay, he or she will use it in the examination too (S5); secondly, that sets of information that could possibly have been enumerated are not so treated in the examination, due perhaps to the pressure of getting the facts down; and lastly, we have an indication that a weak writer may well fail to use this device at all in the examination.

A convenient bridge to the next category, Advance Labelling, is provided by this extract from some cyclostyled notes that are issued to students in the Psychology Department by one of the tutors:

> The structure of an essay can be indicated in an opening sentence or paragraph. A useful way of doing this is to say something like this:
>
> 'This topic, x, can be divided into the following sub-topics: A, B, C, ...N. These in turn, can be approached in the following ways: 1, 2, 3, ...n. In this essay I propose to consider sub-topic, B (or B and C, or ...) in the following way -'
>
> Reading that kind of introduction your reader knows at once whether you are attempting a deep but narrow essay, or a wide but shallow one. Within the bounds of an essay you cannot be both deep and wide, nor need you apologise for not being so.

A neat example of both enumeration and advance labelling. The latter in Tadros' words is the category of prediction in which the writer labels,

and thereby commits him or herself to perform a discourse act. She gives four criteria and this time all must be fulfilled before a sentence can qualify for classification as a predictive member.

1. The sentence must contain a labelling of an act of discourse;

2. The labelling of the act must be prospective;

3. The role of the actor is not assigned elsewhere, and therefore remains as the writer's;

4. The sentence labelling the act must not include its performance [I would like to alter this to its *complete* performance].

Here is an example from S1's essay:

> Firstly, these differences in decoding and encoding will be discussed briefly ...Some possible explanations for these differences will be considered. The relationship between decoding and encoding will then be examined and finally, some interesting differences in decoding the various non-verbal channels of communication will be discussed.

A reasonable hypothesis might be that the essay, being the result of thought, planning, revising, etc would include more predictive items of this sort. This hypothesis was not in any way confirmed by this small sample. The results of the search were very disappointing. They are presented together with the results from the Recapitulation search as these two categories are complementary. Both are types of metastatement. Recapitulation, according to Tadros, is used to refer to a member which predicts by recalling information from a previous place in the text. In her words, 'In order to prevent new information from floating, the writer often provides an anchorage for it by means of Recapitulation, and therefore Recapitulation predicts new information.' (Tadros 1985). Here is an example, again from S1's essay:

> This discussion of sex and personality differences in non-verbal communication of emotion has so far not dealt with the relationship between decoding and encoding within individuals.

We might call this negative recapitulation but it certainly predicts what the writer will deal with next.

Only one student of the five had used either of these devices.

Student 1 had two instances of advance labelling and two instances of recapitulation in the essay and one of each in the examination. I was somewhat surprised by these results. Was this typical of student writing? I turned to another section of my sample, papers from students studying Freud and Piaget as their special subject. There the picture was quite different: four of the six students used advance labelling and recapitulation in both conditions, only one did not use them at all. It is difficult to believe that this difference is an effect of topic. It may in fact be an indicator of quality and as such could be useful.

As indicated earlier, I was particularly interested in the categories which indicated detachment from the propositional content under discussion. I found, however, that the Tadros definition of reporting was too narrow for my data. Tadros had in mind such pairs as:

> For a long time many people thought that if a severe rise in unemployment occurred, a 'cost-push' inflation would peter out. The steep rise in unemployment during 1969-71 however, did little to check demands for higher wages which, in fact increased more rapidly during these years than ever before.

where the act of reporting is a prelude to demolishing or modifying the proposition reported. Other examples might lead to evaluation rather than rebuttal. In both cases the predicted sentences would follow the predictive sentence immediately.

Since I could only find one example of reporting as defined by Tadros in the ten pieces of writing I was examining, in spite of the fact that students were all the time reporting what others had said, I felt that I ought to look closer at this. What I discovered was that there were naturally enough

many reporting sentences but that there were comparatively few evaluative statements of a local nature that could be seen as detached. There were evaluative sentences, but they were reported evaluations and it was often very difficult to tell (without knowing the literature) whether these evaluative statements were the writer's or well-worn comments from the literature, or indeed the judgements taught on the course. What was interesting, however, was the discovery that the relation did exist at the global discourse level - in other words, pieces that were almost entirely reporting the experiments of others and the comments of others upon the findings of those experiments ended with an evaluative note in six out of ten cases. Bearing in mind that we have moved from the local to the global level, it is interesting to look at these results in conjunction with the discourse acts required.

Table 2

Student	Discourse Act	Evaluation
1	Essay: Examine	Some evaluative statements but no evaluative conclusion
	Exam: Evaluate	No evaluation, answer unfinished
2	Essay: Examine	No evaluation
	Exam: Evaluate	Small evaluative conclusion
3	Essay: Evaluate	Evaluative conclusion
	Exam: Discuss	Evaluative conclusion
4	Essay: Evaluate	Small evaluative conclusion
	Exam: Discuss	No evaluation
5	Essay: Evaluate	Evaluative conclusion
	Exam: Discuss	Evaluative conclusion

When students were explicitly asked to evaluate, whether this was in the essay or in the examination, they did so four times out of five (and we are unable to judge the fifth case properly because it is unfinished). With reference to the second subgroup where two of the three students produced evaluative conclusions in both conditions, it might be worth considering whether the recognition of the need for an evaluative conclusion is a feature of better quality writing.

As far as clausal relations were concerned, however, it seemed that the report-evaluation/rebuttal relation, while obviously salient enough in Tadros' data, a work with pedagogical intent, written by someone confident enough to come into the discourse as 'primary knower' as Tadros, quoting Berry, says, was just not common enough in this particular section of my data to take account of.

Hypotheticality also proved not to be relevant to my data and there were too few instances of Question to be worth report. In both cases it may transpire that these categories are of use when looking at the writing from the other special subject areas (there are four altogether). In the meantime it seemed necessary, in view of the limitations of the Tadros model with respect to my data, to pursue another line of investigation. This involves testing out the predictive power of a text by revealing it to a reader a sentence at a time, allowing the reader to look back over already revealed text but not forward. This is a technique reported by Bush (1983). She found that there seemed to be a link between successful anticipation of subsequent text by the reader, and readability. Space does not permit a report of my preliminary findings but I hope that this will be the topic of another paper.

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DO DICTIONARIES HELP STUDENTS WRITE?

Hilary Nesi
University of Warwick

Introduction

In this paper I shall give some examples of real lexical errors made by learner writers, and consider the way in which three learners' dictionaries, the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (ALD), the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (LDOCE) and the Chambers Universal Learners' Dictionary (CULD), deal with the lexical items that have been misused. I would like to show what happens when a student turns to the dictionary because he is uncertain about a choice of word, or because he wants to understand why his choice of word has been marked wrong. The evidence from user surveys (Yorkey 1979; Scholfield 1982) suggests that learners use learners' dictionaries much more commonly for receptive than for productive use, but before we try to change the disctionary users' habits, and assign a key role to the dictionary in the writing class, we need to find out whether dictionaries provide the right kind of information for language production. If learners rarely consult dictionaries when writing, is this not because the dictionaries themselves are primarily geared to helping them to read?

A major feature of learners' dictionaries is that they include grammatical and phonetic information to help learners to produce language. The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary has Hornby's famous verb patterns, the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English has a more elaborate system with patterns for verbs and other parts of speech, and Chambers Universal Learners' Dictionary gives grammar notes for individual entries. This kind of material, however, seems to be merely tacked on to works with a traditional design. The most important part of the dictionary entry, the lexical-semantic information, shows little sign of change or development in the direction of production, as Scholfield (1979) and Jain (1981) point out.

Types of Lexical Error

Errors are errors because they are inappropriate in the context in which they appear. By 'context', however, we may mean many things. Fillmore (1976), not of course discussing lexis at the time, interprets it in three ways:

> We can speak of the context of an utterance (or utterance fragment) and intend by that either the real world situation in which the utterance is produced, or the other utterances that surround it in discourse. We can also speak of the context of the experience or precept that makes up the base of our understanding of the word.

With reference to Fillmore's interpretation of context I have divided the lexical errors into three types:

- Context = 'the real word situation in which the utterance is produced.' The error is a question of inappropriate register.
- Context = 'the other utterances that surround it in discourse.' The error is a result of incomplete knowledge of the collocational range of the words involved.
- Context = 'the experience or precept which makes up the base of our understanding of a word.' The error is a question of mistaken identity.

I regard this categorisation simply as a convenient means of grouping the errors for discussion. The errors in my survey, however, were not evenly divided between the three categories. The majority fell into the third category as errors of mistaken identity, and inappropriate register accounted for only a small proportion of my sample. Register may have been less of a problem because the texts I dealt with were about half way along the scale of formality, being neither communications between friends nor impersonal technical compositions. This is the register which students with a grounding of General English know best.

In my original survey I looked at about 35 lexical errors, taken mostly from placement test answers written by overseas postgraduate students at Aston University. For reasons of space I will now discuss only ten of the most interesting examples: two errors of register, four collocational errors and four errors of meaning.

Category 1: Errors of register

Impermeable: CLOTHES IMPERMEABLE (to wear when cycling)

There is a syntactic error in the positioning of the adjective, but the writer's meaning is quite clear. WATERPROOF would be an acceptable alternative. CULD gives 'tech' as a marker of appropriate register in the entry for IMPERMEABLE. ALD's definition: (formal) that cannot be permeated esp. by fluids is not a particularly useful one for receptive use as the learner who does not know IMPERMEABLE is not likely to know PERMEATE. The error in my survey was one of register rather than of meaning, however, and ALD's 'formal' marker is inadequate to indicate this. (The OED's spec. in physics is more precise.)

LDOCE gives no indication of register; this deficiency could have been obviated by referring the reader to the entry for WATERPROOF as the definition of WATERPROOF specifies (too narrowly, in fact) an outer garment. All three dictionaries fail to give a less formal/technical alternative for IMPERMEABLE.

Before: MY PARENTS NEVER SPOKE ABOUT SERIOUS MATTERS BEFORE US.

I take BEFORE to mean here in the presence of, for which sense CULD has the marker 'formal'. CULD gives as an example the criminal appeared before the judge and ALD uses a similar sentence to illustrate BEFORE with this meaning, although it does not give any indication of appropriate register. ALD does give a warning about the use of BEFORE as contrasted with BEHIND: except in a few phrases IN FRONT OF is preferred to BEFORE. This warning is inadequate - the phrases where BEFORE in this sense would be acceptable are not specified - but, together with the examples given, it may have the effect of alerting the language producer to the restricted use of BEFORE,

persuading him in favour of IN FRONT OF, which is acceptable in contexts where either meaning is intended.

LDOCE does not distinguish between BEFORE in the sense of IN THE PRESENCE OF and BEFORE as contrasted with BEHIND. It gives no 'formal' marker or usage note and indeed the definition and examples seem actively to encourage errors of register: LDOCE in front of: she stood before him; the wide lands lying before the travellers.

The entry in LDOCE is designed to help the learner-reader by giving examples of possible meanings he might find given to the word. It does not illustrate typical contemporary use and is of little help to the learner-writer.

Although the label 'formal' was adequate to prevent these errors in the contexts in which I found them, the learner might find it misleading. In many situations which require 'formal' behaviour, these lexical items, marked 'formal' in the dictionaries, would still be inappropriate.

Category 2: Collocational errors

I use the term 'collocation' rather loosely, and include not only those restricted word combinations which are inexplicable in terms of meaning, but also words which operate within a restricted range, acceptable only when used in conjunction with a lexical set holding some semantic features in common. Although meaning does play a part in this type of collocability the non-native may not know which meaning features are significant.

Great: I WOULD LIKE TO DO SOME INTERNATIONAL COMMERCE IN A GREAT FIRM

GREAT in the sense in which it is intended here is defined by ALD and CULD without any indication of range restrictions: ALD well above average in size, quantity or degree; CULD very large, loud etc. LDOCE gives a similar definition but does not include 'large in size'. Collocation restrictions are indicated for its use in this sense: LDOCE big (usu before another adj of size). This is similar to ALD's listing of another sense of

GREAT: used to emphasise other words describing size: a great big stick; a great many people believe in astronomy. The example in CULD - there was a great crowd of people at the football match - may also suggest that GREAT is an indication of size only when used as an intensifier with a word for something that is characteristically large.

I consider the use of GREAT in my example as a collocational error because its use in one particular sense has been extended beyond the appropriate context. As is the case with several of the collocational errors I examined, the word acquires a different and unintended meaning outside its restricted contextual range. From the receptive point of view, GREAT is handled quite adequately by the dictionaries, with each sense of the word placed in an appropriate context. The writer or speaker, however, could quite easily misuse the word after consulting ALD or CULD. ALD's well above average in size seems to fit perfectly the writer in my survey's meaning.

A short usage note seems justified, considering the frequency with which GREAT is misused. The note in Fowler's Modern English Usage is helpful: 'GREAT does sometimes mean of remarkable size - the sense that it has for the most part resigned to LARGE and BIG - but it is so used where size is to be represented as causing emotion'.

Driver: ...THE PEDAL, WHICH ALLOWS THE BICYCLE TO MOVE WHEN IT IS PRESSED BY THE FEET OF THE DRIVER

Drive: IT CAN BE DRIVED [sic] BY ONE PERSON ONLY [a bicycle]

There is nothing in the dictionaries under DRIVE or DRIVER to suggest that their use is inappropriate with BICYCLE (although all three collocate BICYCLE with the headword RIDE, and RIDE or RIDING with the headword BICYCLE). Riding usually involves sitting with the legs astride, but the non-native is not to know that this distinguishing feature is important. ALD and LDOCE give similar definitions of DRIVE: LDOCE to guide and control (a horse or a vehicle); ALD operate, direct the course of a railway engine, bus, motor-car or other vehicle. As a bicycle is a vehicle, these definitions are clearly inadequate for productive purposes. LDOCE even gives BICYCLE as an example

under the headword VEHICLE, and its mention of 'horse' is particularly misleading for the learner who knows the collocation RIDE/HORSE.

CULD's definition is shorter and once again covers fewer alternatives, it is therefore slightly less inducive to lexical error. Nevertheless, 'etc' suggests a wider collocational range: to control or guide (a car etc.)

Pursue: I PURSUED A TWO-YEAR DIPLOMA COURSE
I AM NOW PURSUING A BSc HONOURS DEGREE COURSE
I WANT TO PURSUE [A] PhD DEGREE IN PHYSICS
BEFORE COMING TO ASTON TO PURSUE A POST-GRADUATE DEGREE

The writers of these sentences have extended the collocational range of PURSUE which is defined: LDOCE to continue (steadily) with; ALD go on with, work at; CULD to occupy oneself with, to continue. All three dictionaries collocate PURSUE with STUDIES but do not warn that, although it is possible to talk of 'pursuing' studies, enquiries or a course of action, a less abstract direct object may suggest another related meaning of PURSUE; ALD to go after in order to catch up with, capture or kill.

It seems to me that those contexts where PURSUE takes the direct object DEGREE are definitely inappropriate, while PURSUE A COURSE is marginally more acceptable. This, however, I leave to the judgement of the reader.

One area where non-native speakers often need help is in the use of adjectives derived from verbs. Such adjectives are potentially acceptable (cf Leech 1974:211) but they may have a more limited collocational range than their parent verbs, or they may not be established members of the English lexicon at all. The lexical rules which determine acceptability in word formation and transfer of meaning are quite haphazard, and moreover there are degrees of acceptability, with marginal cases which are neither definitely acceptable nor definitely unacceptable, but which merely sound odd in most contexts. Adjectives formed from verbs are given very little treatment in dictionaries intended for native speaker use,

and the learners' dictionaries have not altered in this practice. The following error is an example of the kind of problem that can occur:

Declined: YOU ARE IN A DECLINED ROAD USE YOUR BRAKE

This error is not purely lexical because (like the accepted form SLOPING) DECLINING as opposed to DECLINED would have greater potential appropriacy. ALD and CULD prevent the error by making no mention of DECLINE in its literal sense: to slant or slope downward (OED). LDOCE indicates that the word may indeed have this meaning: to slope or move downwards: about two miles east, the land begins to decline towards the river. LDOCE gives no information about the appropriate use of adjectives formed from DECLINE, and there is no note that, although it is possible to speak of DECLINING HEALTH, SALES or MORALS, a DECLINING ROAD in the literal sense is not acceptable.

Category 3: Errors of meaning

I regard 'drive a bicycle' as a collocational error because the easiest way of illustrating the difference in meaning between RIDE and DRIVE is to cite the nouns which collocate with each. Nevertheless the native speaker regards RIDE and DRIVE as being different actions, and there is some overlap between errors in category 2 and errors in category 3.

Category 3 errors were the most numerous in my survey and probably best test the efficacy of the dictionaries. Learners' dictionaries could do more to guide their users in matters of register and collocation, but their main objective is to make clear what words mean, so that the learner can understand them in context and can be understood when he uses them in his own utterances. Most of the errors of meaning I found resulted from only a slightly different frame of reference regarding a lexical item. In many cases the non-native assigns a broader sense to the word than it has in normal use, and often the chosen word has unfavourable connotations of which the learner is unaware.

The first error I examined in this category was accounted for fairly well by the dictionaries, but other errors of meaning were not adequately explained.

Exposé: THE FOLLOWING EXPOSÉ OF THE ORGANISATION OF MY BANK

ALD gives two definitions of EXPOSÉ: 1. orderly setting out or précis of a body of facts or beliefs. 2. making public of discreditable fact(s). The writer in my survey clearly intended EXPOSÉ in the sense listed first by ALD, but in everyday language I doubt that this is a real alternative to the second 'bad' sense of the word. LDOCE and CULD give only one (neutral) definition of EXPOSÉ with an indication of its unfavourable sense in brackets: LDOCE (esp shameful): CULD (sometimes outspoken).

Fowler's Modern English Usage is out of sympathy with EXPOSÉ whichever meaning it is used to express: 'EXPOSÉ is an unwanted gallicism; EXPOSITION will serve in one of its senses and EXPOSURE in the other'.

Casual: A CASUAL THUNDERSTORM

ALD gives two definitions of EXPOSÉ, only one of which fits the meaning intended by the speaker in my survey. The two definitions, however, clearly overlap, the second simply including an unfavourable aspect which the first one lacks. The various meanings of CASUAL, on the other hand, are not so obviously related. ALD lists three: 1. happening by chance. 2. careless, undesigned, unmethodical; informal. 3. irregular, not continued. CULD separates the senses careless and informal, and LDOCE expands the number of senses to six by adding uninterested and not close, but happening by chance - the meaning intended in A CASUAL THUNDERSTORM - might not appear to be connected with the other meanings of CASUAL; the non-native could be forgiven for believing that it had an independent existence, unaffected by the connotations surrounding CASUAL in other contexts. Moreover, the examples given to illustrate CASUAL in the sense of happening by chance do not suggest that it has a limited collocational range: a casual meeting (LDOCE; ALD) a casual remark (CULD).

The meaning of CASUAL is shifting so that what was merely connotative in an earlier sense (the careless, informal element) is now becoming criterial. The definition happening by chance reflects an earlier sense of

CASUAL and, following the pattern of OED, both ALD and LDOCE list it first. This is certainly misleading for non-natives in a hurry to discover a 'base' meaning for the word in modern use. CULD lists happening by chance third out of the four meanings it gives for CASUAL, and lists not careful (enough) first, according to its policy of arranging meanings in order of frequency. It seems to me that in colloquial English CASUAL in the sense of happening by chance always suggests informality. A chance encounter with a colleague at a business meeting would not be a casual one, for example. Properties of CASUAL that are criterial to it in other senses have a connotative value here, with the result that A CASUAL THUNDERSTORM (as opposed to A CHANCE THUNDERSTORM) is anomalous.

Interesting: NOWADAYS THE INTERESTING THING IS TO PRODUCE A SAFE RELIABLE CAR

FINALLY I THINK THE SECOND SOLUTION IS QUITE INTERESTING. SO I WOULD RECOMMEND IT BECAUSE IT IS NOT EXPENSIVE COMPARED TO THE OTHERS, AND IT TAKES ONE YEAR.

What did the writers (Algerian postgraduate engineering students) mean by INTERESTING in these contexts? As in the case of CASUAL these writers may have chosen a sense close to one of the senses of a cognate word they knew, but which was rare or obsolete in English. OED lists as obsolete INTERESTING in the sense: that concerns, touches or affects; important. Was this the meaning intended by the writer in the first example, his message being that the production of a safe, reliable motor car now MATTERS (whereas in the past car manufacturers were less concerned about safety and reliability)?

In its definition of INTERESTING in the modern sense (adapted to excite interest; of interest) OED refers us to INTEREST the noun, which is defined as the fact or quality of mattering; concernment; importance and the relationship of being concerned or affected in respect of advantage or detriment, among other things. This suggests a further meaning of INTERESTING in my two examples - the writers might have meant to imply some financial advantage, as in 'an interesting proposition'. This seems particularly probable in the second example. The meaning of the

verb INTEREST sheds light on the most common senses of INTERESTING in native speech. OED gives to affect with a feeling of concern; to excite the curiosity or attention of, and the quotation from Dickens which illustrates this meaning - your account of the first night interested me immensely - seems to surround the verb with a connotation of enjoyment which often attaches itself to the modern use of INTEREST and INTERESTING, but which seems to be absent from earlier senses, and from the intended sense of INTERESTING in my example. Roget's Thesaurus lists ABSORBING, ATTRACTIVE, APPEALING, ENGAGING, MAGNETIC, PROVOCATIVE, EXCITING, ENTERTAINING, AMUSING, DIVERTING, and PLEASING as synonyms for INTERESTING. Most of these suggest pleasure or entertainment.

The dictionaries, however, do not mention this aspect of INTERESTING at all. All three define INTERESTING in terms of INTEREST the noun, and this is defined as concerning CURIOSITY and PROFIT. Only ALD makes it really clear which kind of INTEREST (of the many listed) INTERESTING holding the attention; arousing interest (1) refers to. INTEREST (1) is condition of wanting to know or learn about sth or sb, a definition which greatly aids our understanding of INTERESTING in everyday use. The other dictionaries do not have a numbering system like this, and do not define INTERESTING at all except in terms of INTEREST: LDOCE INTERESTING which takes and keeps one's interest; CULD INTERESTING arousing interest. They both offer various definitions of INTEREST, the first one of which, LDOCE readiness to give attention, CULD curiosity, attention, might allow the dictionary user to interpret INTERESTING in a sense which fits at least the first of the examples in my survey discussed above.

A learner who had not yet developed an intuitive knowledge of the appropriate uses of INTEREST and INTERESTING would find the information in the learners' dictionaries (particularly LDOCE and CULD) confusing rather than illuminating.

Education: MY EDUCATION HAS BEEN GIVEN TO ME BY MY PARENTS AND BY SOME TEACHERS AT SCHOOL. I THINK THAT MY PARENTS HAVE ACHIEVED THEIR RESPONSIBILITY IN GIVING ME A GOOD

EDUCATION, THAT IS TO SAY THE EDUCATION OF EVERYDAY LIFE. AT SCHOOL I'VE LEARNT A GENERAL EDUCATION WHICH WAS WELL TAUGHT.

This comment was written in response to the instruction 'write about your education so far'. The compilers of the test paper expected an account of schooling and qualifications, but this writer has interpreted EDUCATION in a broader sense; she has attached a scene to her sense of the word which, most of the time for native speakers, is lacking.

The writer is quite clear what she means by EDUCATION - it is of two types, 'the education of everyday life', which takes place in the family, and 'general education', which takes place at school. This accords well with the definitions in OED, the earlier of which concerns the manner in which a person has been brought up, and the later the systematic instruction, schooling or training given to the young.

ALD and CULD define EDUCATION in terms of this second sense of the word, but LDOCE, presumably in an attempt to cover both meanings of the word in a short entry, is misleading and tends to suggest EDUCATION in the sense of UPBRINGING, a sense which it now rarely has: (the result of) teaching or training of mind and character: she had had a good education.

Conclusions

Dictionaries tend to be judged by the number and type of headwords listed and the ease with which the definitions can be understood. Reviewers approach their task from the receptive rather than the productive point of view, and look for the words that a learner might hear or read, rather than the meanings that she might have difficulty in expressing. In this survey I have examined the dictionaries from the point of view of the learner-writer, and my results suggest that all three dictionaries can seriously mislead the student, even in the choice of comparatively common words. The following suggestions are intended to guide the dictionary makers in their compilation of any new

production-oriented dictionary, so that problems of the type I have discussed can be avoided in the future.

- As in CULD, alternative meanings for polysemic words should be listed as far as possible in order of their frequency of occurrence in current English use. Unusual meanings should be omitted or labelled clearly to warn the user of their restricted applicability.

- Where surveys of learner errors have shown that one word is frequently chosen in place of another, more appropriate one, the two words should be cross-referenced and their distinguishing features made clear.

- There should be a wide range of labels marking appropriate register. Where possible, there should be cross-references to alternative words in other registers.

- Where surveys show that there is a common misconception about the behaviour or meaning of a word, there should be a usage note to prevent error.

- Selectional restrictions and collocational restrictions should be specified for each entry. One or two examples do not give sufficient information for the learner who wants to know if a word is appropriate in a particular context.

- One-word definitions should be avoided, as they encourage the learner to believe in false equivalences between words.

- Words with 'bad' connotations should always be clearly labelled.

- Words formed from other words, for example, adjectives formed from past and present participles of verbs, should be given full and separate treatment. If the meaning or appropriate range differs with respect to the parent word, this should be made clear.

- Words which can best be understood in terms of national culture should be explained in these terms - or the user could perhaps be referred to a companion work.

Perhaps I am asking too much of the dictionary makers. A lot of information must be fitted into a dictionary, and the compiler of a relatively compact general dictionary certainly does not have the space to provide a complete range of appropriate contexts for every word (cf Cowie 1978). It may be significant to this study, however, that while lexicographers claim to define those words:

> 'that the learner is likely to come across in everyday English speech, in official and formal writing'
> (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, Introduction)

they have not, as far as I am aware, drawn upon any survey of the very words learners confuse in their own speech and writing.

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THE ORAL DIMENSIONS OF LITERACY EVENTS: A LETTER FROM THE DHSS

Mike Baynham
Lee Community Education Centre, Goldsmiths College

The Theoretical Context

The study of literacy in its social context has been advocated by a number of anthropologists, sociolinguists and ethnographers of speaking over the last decade or so. In his programmatic paper, The Ethnography of Writing, Basso concludes with this statement:

> Adequate ethnographies of writing do not yet exist because linguists and anthropologists alike have grown accustomed to investigating written codes with only passing reference to the social systems in which they are embedded. In this essay, I have suggested that the time has come for this strategy to be reversed. When all is said and done, we shall find that the activity of writing, like the activity of speaking, is a supremely social act. Simultaneously, I believe, we shall find that it is far more complex - and therefore more intriguing - than we have suspected heretofore.
>
> (Basso 1974)

Szwed in his paper The Ethnography of Literacy writes:

> But the stunning fact is that we do not fully know what literacy is. The assumption that it is simply a matter of the skills of reading and writing does not even begin to approach the fundamental problem: what are reading and writing for?
>
> (Szwed 1981)

He invites the student of literacy to step outside the classroom:

> I propose that we step back from the question of instruction, back to an even more basic 'basic', the social meaning of

literacy: that is, the roles these abilities play in social life; the varieties of reading and writing available for choice; the contexts of their performance; and the manner in which they are interpreted and tested, not by experts, but by ordinary people in ordinary activities.

(ibid)

This approach suggests that literacy practices are complexly patterned, like other communicative and social practices and that the study of the social meaning of literacy can be enriched by ethnographic methods, typically fieldwork involving participant observation, gathering autobiographical accounts of literacy practices as well as analysis of texts.

A number of studies have focussed on the social meaning of literacy and exemplify the approaches advocated by Basso and Szwed. The Scollons have looked at literacy in the context of interethnic communication, suggesting that for Athabaskan students to perform well in the literacy of the dominant Anglo culture they have to abandon preferred communicative patterns:

> The Athabaskan set of discourse patterns are to a large extent mutually exclusive of the discourse patterns of essayist prose. In order to write, the Athabaskan must adopt discourse patterns that are identified with a particular ethnic group, identified in Canada and Alaska as English speakers.
>
> (Scollon & Scollon 1981)

They suggest that the demands of schooling, particularly of writing essayist prose, produce internal conflict in the Athabaskan writer, similar to the crosscultural conflict that can be produced in oral communication when two speakers from different ethnic groups fail to identify the ground rules for mutual understanding.

Heath, in a project which studied communicative practices in three communities in the Piedmont Carolinas, a white working class community, a black working class community and the townspeople, black and white, who are members of the mainstream, dominant culture, finds differences in the 'ways with words' of these three groups, both spoken

and written, which significantly affect the life chances of the two working class communities (Heath 1983).

Scribner and Cole, in a study which sets out to challenge dominant conceptions of writing, such as the essayist literacy referred to above, write:

> But we believe that near-exclusive preoccupation with school-based writing practices has some unfortunate consequences. The assumption that logicality is in the text and the text is in the school can lead to a serious underestimation of the cognitive skills involved in non-school, non-essay writing, and, reciprocally, to an overestimation of the intellectual skills that the essayist test necessarily entails.
>
> (Scribner & Cole 1981)

They studied the literacy practices of the Vai people of Northwestern Liberia who have potential access to three literacies, an indigenous Vai script, Arabic and English, with the object of testing out dominant hypotheses on the effects of literacy, notably that there is a great divide between the literate and the non-literate, that literacy is a necessary prerequisite for logical thinking, that becoming literate entails fundamental cognitive restructurings, that control intellectual performance in all domains.

The arguments that have emerged from this approach to the study of literacy have been synthesised in a useful way by Street in his book Literacy in Theory and Practice (Street 1984). He proposes that there is an 'autonomous model' of literacy which corresponds to the dominant conceptions that Scribner and Cole refer to. The autonomous model proposes that there are universalistic consequences of literacy, like the existence of fundamental differences of cognitive organisation between literate and non-literate individuals and groups, and the claim that literacy is a fundamental precondition for the development of logical thought and abstraction. Street argues that the proponents of the autonomous model, while claiming to read off large scale consequences for literacy, are in fact naturalising and universalising the literacy practices of a particular dominant group, typically those who have successfully been through the school system, typically themselves. In

opposition to this autonomous model of literacy, with its universalising claims and tacit ethnocentric bias, Street develops an 'ideological model' of literacy. Street's ideological model draws on many of the characteristics of the ethnographic approach to literacy research mentioned above and indeed cites Scribner and Cole, Heath, and the Scollons as illustrations. The ideological model rejects over-ambitious generalisations about the consequences of literacy. Instead it proposes an attempt to understand literacy in terms of concrete social practices and to theorise it in terms of the ideologies in which different literacies are embedded. Specifically he argues against a 'great divide' between orality and literacy (citing Finnegan [unpublished]). In contrast to a monolithic conception of literacy, to which non-literacy is opposed, the ideological model proposes, along with Cole and Scribner, Heath, Scollon and Scollon, and others, that there are literacies, situated social practices which must be investigated in their own terms in order to generate more complex and grounded hypotheses into the nature of literacy, its relationship to oral communication and the embedding of both into given socio-political orders.

The Moroccan Study

Having established this theoretical context to current work on literacy, I would now like to go on to consider aspects of the literacy practices of the Moroccan community in the Ladbroke Grove area of West London. The majority of Moroccans in West London come from the North West of Morocco, from the area in and around Tangier and Larache. These are areas with a history of migration, both internally, from the country to the city, and externally to Europe, mostly France, Germany, Belgium and Holland. The migration to Britain developed in the 1960s with the boom in the hotel business which led to workers being actively recruited from abroad. The 1971 Immigration Act halted this process and Moroccan immigration into the UK since then has largely consisted of dependants coming to join their families. Migration attracted people from a wide range of educational backgrounds, ranging from those with little or no schooling to those who completed their secondary education but saw their life chances blocked in Morocco and decided to try work abroad.

In my consideration of the literacy practices of the community in London, I will be drawing on the work of a large scale study of literacy in its social context in Morocco which is being undertaken under the direction of Daniel Wagner of the University of Pennsylvania in collaboration with the Faculty of Education of the Mohammed V University in Rabat. This study, drawing on data from survey, interviews and ethnographies, takes up a broad range of issues which it is beyond the scope of this paper adequately to refer to. What is of immediate interest however is the use of ethnographic approaches to describe the complex uses of literacy in contemporary Morocco and the extrapolation from this situated work of a proposed general framework for studying literacy in complex societies.

Wagner and his associates take the 'literacy event' as the basic unit of observation, as do Heath, Street and others. Heath for example quotes a definition of the literacy event from Anderson, Teal and Estrada (1980) as 'any sequence, involving one or more persons, in which the production and/or comprehension of print plays a role'. Heath suggests that 'literacy events have social interactional rules which regulate the type and amount of **talk** about what is written, and define ways in which **oral language** reinforces, denies, extends, or sets aside the written material'.

There are a number of points coming out of the study in Morocco which have direct relevance to the literacy practices of the Moroccan community in London. Wagner points out that 'historically to be illiterate was not considered a negative stigma, though it can be in contemporary Morocco (Wagner, Messick & Spratt , forthcoming). He notes that 'literacy is now often perceived as a need and a right whereas it was once something that a person as a member of a group or neighbourhood might accomplish indirectly' (ibid). Wagner speaks of traditional mediators of literacy, formal and informal. These include public writers, with differing degrees of specialised knowledge of legal literacies. The preparation of legal documents is the province of the notary or 'adil. A second category of public writers, with a low level of self taught expertise in legal matters, carry out day to day literacy work, often using typewriters to fill out forms for people, write personal letters. Wagner asserts that, despite the recent development of a 'modern' ideology of personal literacy, traditional mediators of literacy are by no means out of business. He estimates that considerably less than

half the adult Moroccan population can read or write with fluency in any language. As well as these professional mediators of literacy, informal mediators are often found on family or neighbourhood networks. Parents may depend on their literate children to read to them. Wagner suggests that these 'joint literacy events' contrast with the modern ideology of individual literacy. He asserts that 'literacy is not possessed and understood only by a small elite, even in countries where a majority can neither read nor write' (Wagner, Messick and Spratt, cited above).

A Literacy Event

I would like now to examine the concept of 'jointly achieved literacy events' in which an individual calls on a 'mediator of literacy' in the London context. I will cite a tape of a literacy event recorded during an interview carried out as part of the fieldwork for a study of oral narrative. (See pages 102 to 106 for extracts.)

The scene is the sitting room of Touria's flat. I have arrived, armed with a cassette tape recorder, to interview her. Touria's aunt, Menana, is also visiting. Menana has received a letter from the DHSS and asks me to tell her what it says.

I read the letter and tell her the gist of it (see extract 1 below). The DHSS claim that she has continued to cash her giro book after she started work and demand repayment of £96.96. She angrily denies the DHSS claim. The reader will notice that I am very careful to attribute each statement that I relay to her, making clear that the DHSS is making these claims, not me: 'it says they've given you too much supplementary benefit, too much money'. No one wants to be the bearer of bad news and there is a thin line between bearing the accusations of others and making those accusations yourself. Coulmas, in a recent paper points out that:

> for linguistic communication it is very important to be able to report what other speakers have said or meant without committing oneself to the contents of what was said in the first place.
>
> (Coulmas 1986)

My care in attributing each claim in the DHSS letter reflects, I think, an awareness of the ambiguity, inherent in my position of mediator of literacy, bringer of bad news.

Menana's response to the gist of the letter is a vehement denial of the accusation which takes the form of a story, the story of what really happened, ('the book I'm give him the book straight', 'yeah I'm give him the book back when me start work ...straight...). We can perhaps call the DHSS letter provocative: it provokes Menana's response, which is structured as an emergent narrative.

In response to Menana's denial, I propose a strategy to her for taking it further: go and see Souad, who is a Moroccan worker at the local CAB. Menana has the right of appeal. I try to explain the concept of appeal and then go on to paraphrase the contents of the letter more fully, producing what is, in effect, a simplified version of the text.

My paraphrase is, in effect, repeating the accusation and produces a repeated denial of the circumstances surrounding the cashing of the disputed giro cheque. Menana, assisted by Touria, continues to reconstruct the narrative of what actually happened, provoked by the challenge of the DHSS letter, mediated through my reading of it. The narrative serves to explain why she cashed the giro: she is paid a week in hand by the new job, for the first week she receives nothing, she has to pay the rent and buy food for herself and her daughter. How could she do that without cashing her giro cheque?

Menana then switches into Spanish, possibly as a way of regaining control of the conversation from her niece, who is beginning to speak for her. Menana again elaborates her narrative of what happened in Spanish and I again repeat my go-and-see-Souad (or rather my tiene-que-ir-hablar-con-Souad) strategy, supported by Touria, who although she cannot speak Spanish, presumably catches the gist of what is being said on hearing the name Souad and re-enters the conversation with 'yeah souad she do it for you'.

In extract 2 I elaborate my advice, which up till now has been mainly focussed on persuading Menana to go and see Souad (the professional):

'well what you should do you have to write a letter saying'

At his point Menana challenges my advice in a very clear way, by drawing my attention to the fact that it is not necessary to write a letter at all, there is a space on the letter from the DHSS to register that you wish to appeal:

'what this write letter this letter ( ) fill this form small'

She points to the letter and asks, in both English and Spanish:

'what she tell him que quiere decir'

At this point I give in, after a pause, and offer to write the letter.

In extract 3, Menana, Touria and myself are reconstructing the story of what actually happened, in this case working out which office Menana went to. This is for my benefit, as part of my work of composing the letter of appeal. After extensive discussion in English, Spanish and Moroccan Arabic, Menana points out the obvious: the address of the office will be on the letter she has received: 'yeah ... look the letter where she come from'.

What is interesting about both these incidents is not my lack of commonsense or concentration on the literacy tasks in hand: conveying the gist of the DHSS letter to Menana and composing a reply. It is the fact that she, while not being literate in any language, is sufficiently knowledgeable about certain aspects of text organisation (what you expect to find in a DHSS letter) that she can intervene actively at key moments in order to shape the development of the literacy event and secure her own purposes: to get me to write her response to the DHSS letter.

In extract 4 I am finishing off the letter. Menana herself wants to get off as she has to go to work. I am however keen that she should hear back what I have written, agree it and sign it. While I am reading it back, I get positive feedback from Menana ('yeah... yeah... that's it'), who caps my final statement, 'I did not cash it after that' with her own 'nothing no eat

one penny him' and provides her own evaluation of the whole incident in both English and Spanish 's crazy locos'.

So what are we to make of this literacy event? Firstly we can say that the literate work that is done is grounded in talk: my silent reading produces versions of the letter which I convey to Menana. The information thus conveyed provokes her response in which she uses narrative strategies to deny the claim in the letter that she owes the DHSS money. The working out of the response involves interaction in English, Spanish and Moroccan Arabic. I read the reply I have composed and it is orally evaluated by Menana. It is interesting to refer to Heath's Ways with Words in which she gives an account of the literacy practices of Trackton, the black working class community, writing:

> For Trackton adults, reading is a social activity; when something is read in Trackton, it almost always provokes narratives, jokes, sidetracking talk, and active negotiation of the meaning of written texts among the listeners.
>
> (Ways with Words page 196)

Secondly, we can see quite clearly the process by which Menana recruited me as mediator, first to tell her what the letter from the DHSS said and then, quite unwillingly on my part, to reply for her. Once she has recruited me to do the literacy work, that work is achieved jointly, with quite notable interventions from herself. We can perhaps distinguish these interventions as being (a) on the level of **content**, in that she contributes information which specifically contradicts the information contained in the DHSS letter, information structured as a narrative which is then transformed by me into a letter notifying the DHSS of Menana's wish to appeal the grounds for the appeal, and (b) on the level of **form** at those moments when she uses her knowledge of the forms of literacy to intervene in the shaping of the literacy event. It is intervention on the level of form which constitutes the powerful strategy by which she finally gets me to write the response for her.

For the third point I wish to raise, I turn back to Heath's statement that literacy events have social interactional rules that regulate the type and amount of talk about what is written. I am struck in reviewing the unfolding of this literacy event, in which I was a participant, by the role

that conflict plays in this unfolding. In a recent paper, Candlin has spoken of 'explaining moments of conflict in discourse', citing examples from institutional settings. Fairclough (1986) refers to work on unequal encounters in institutional settings and stresses the need for discourse analysis to explore the role of institutional power and status in overdetermining interactional patterns. Now I would argue that what is happening in this literacy event is that an institutional voice, the message of the letter that the DHSS sent to Menana, has intruded into a setting which would normally be regarded as marked for informality: her niece's front room. As mediator of literacy I am introducing this voice into the conversation. The message of this letter, with its demand that Menana repay £96.96, produces a response of anger and resentment (a perlocutionary effect in the vocabulary of speech act theory) and provokes her to tell her own version of events. This is the primary conflict in the situation, between the DHSS's demand for repayment and Menana's rejection of that demand. There are however other conflicts going on as the interaction develops. There is a conflict between my strategy for action and Menana's unwillingness to adopt it. My strategy is typically professional: when in doubt, refer. I am in doubt as to the best thing to do, so I refer her on to Souad. Menana, who is not in good health, is not keen, understandably, to trail down to the CAB on her one day off in the week when she has someone on hand who is perfectly capable of fulfilling her purposes (ie me). Menana is operating an informal network strategy of the type described by Wagner. She is able to use effective strategies to achieve the solution to her immediate problem in the face of quite spirited opposition from me, being doggedly committed to my professional strategy of referral.

Fairclough (1985) has criticised the notion that exchange of information between participants having equal discoursal and pragmatic rights and obligations is the unmarked case, focussing on Grice's cooperative principle. He regards the idealisation underlying such theories of 'communication' or 'conversation' as being inadequate to deal with the discourse of unequal encounters. I would suggest, using this literacy event as prima facie evidence, that a useful pragmatic theory must be able to deal with the management of conflict in conversation, just as much as it must be able to handle the achievement of cooperation between participants. Menana's account of what actually happened is achieved in conflict with the accusation made in the letter from the DHSS. The

development of this literacy event can be seen in terms of a struggle between participants to determine the way it should develop and its eventual outcome.

Conclusion

The ethnographic approach proposes that literacy should be studied in the context of its use, that there is no great divide between orality and literacy and that in concrete social settings literacy is done through talk. I have tried to illustrate this approach in the consideration of the literacy event that ensued when Menana asked me to tell her what was in the DHSS letter. We have seen how the shaping of the literacy event involved both cooperation and conflict. Menana, the participant who might least be expected to be in control of an interaction which involves reading and writing, is able to intervene and play an important part in the shaping of the literacy event. Following Candlin and Fairclough, I have tentatively suggested that the social interactional rules regulating the type and amount of talk about what is written might best be understood within a pragmatic theory that can deal with the discourse of unequal encounters and recognises the role of conflict as well as cooperation in talk.

A letter from the DHSS: extracts from the data

M = Menana, T = Touria, I = Interviewer
( ) = talk not transcribed, ... = pause

Extract 1: Paraphrasing the DHSS letter for Menana.
Her response to it.
My strategy for responding: go and see Souad

I: department of health and social security
M: yeah what's happen
I: supplementary benefit ... oh dear ...
M: what's happen Mike
I: it says they've given you too much supplementary benefit too much money

M: social security no much give it to me because I'm pay the rent twenty six pound twenty four pound for the rent still to me twenty four onlo give me this ...
T: shnu 'andum ...
I: it says they've given you ninety six pounds too much
M: nooh never give me ninety six... give me every week
I: yeah
M: the book I'm give him the book straight ...
I: it says they wanted you to give the book back when you started work
N: yeah I'm give him the book back when me start work ... straight ...
I: mmm... do you know what I think you ought to do
M: yeah
I: is a problem like this is a bit difficult you know is a difficult problem you ought to erm do you know Souad who works in the office there
T: yeah Souad
M: yeah Souad yeah
I: if you go and see her and then ask her to write a letter cos you have to you have to write the letter to say this is wrong
M: s a wrong
T: mm
I: it's called an appeal you have to make an appeal ... let me just tell you I'll tell you exactly what the letter says it says dear madam I'm sorry to tell you that you have been paid ninety six pounds too much because of you didn't give the book back when you started work
M: yeah I'm give him straight
I: straight away
M: yeah
T: yes
I: it says that you can (.....)
M: no I'm give him straight the book
T: straight on when she (.....) she give him straight on
M: (.....) give him straight away the lady take with me cut the book
I: straight away
T: yes
M: yeah straight away
I: because they says that you didn't they say here that you didn't do it
M: nooh do it straight first week call first week after give him me collect the money friday I'm give him monday
T: monday ( )

M: no no no no take the money no take the money monday I'm leave the money in the book I'm give him
T: because she off monday and she start work
M: yeah
T: she start work
M: no
T: ( ) she get first week for her work the first week is friday
M: yeah
T: she get her money and then ( )
M: (.....)
D: and monday she go straight away she don't go to post office to take money she go straight on to give him his book because she have money now
I: she gave

M: yo cobrar
T: yes
M: cobrar el viernes el lunes cobrar social security no
I: yeah
M: yo no cobrar lo lleva asi
I: si
M: el abril el día cinco
I: dia cinco
M: yo empieza a trabajar el día cinco el día trece lo da el libro el día cinco si coje money
I: si
M: because starting monday yo cobrar
I: pues ellos dicen que entre el cinco y el diez y siete
M: eso
I: tenía vd tenía el libro
M: si yo cobrar el día cinco
I: si
M: pero el día cinco empieza a trabajar qué comer qué pagar la renta
I: ah hah
M: ahora ahora todavía no pagáste la renta que tambien lo dice a mi ( )
I: bueno tiene que ir a la oficina hablar hablar con souad
T: yeah souad she do it for you

Extract 2: Menana challenges my strategy and I offer to write a response for her myself

I: well what you should do you have to write a letter saying
M: this letter look (.....) send me this letter look this (.....)
I: I think it's much better Menana if you take erm take this to see Souad because she understands all the problems
T: yes
I: and what you'll have to do is write a letter saying I returned
M: what this write letter this letter (.....) fill this form small
I: yeah
T: (.....)
M: what she tell him qué quiere decir
I: pues ... (.....)
I: do you want me to write the letter
M: yeah please
I: can you tell me I'll start start the letter and you can tell me
M: empieza a trabajar el día cinco de abril

Extract 3: Reconstructing the story of what actually happened

I: where where did you give dónde eh dónde trajiste el libro este
M: social security
I: dónde en westbourne grove
T: yeah westbourne grove
M: yeah westbourne grove ... no no this westbourne grove here no no no
I: el otro
M: l otro
I: como se llama
M: no sé como se llama
T: mashi dyel hinaya
M: nooh the rounjit baker street
I: lisson grove
M: yeah this one nearly in baker street
I: yeah
M: yeah ... look the letter where she come from

Extract 4: Reading the letter back to Menana and her evaluation of the incident

M: no necesita a mi because marcha a trabajar marcha en sitio de mi sobrino
I: yeah
M: si porque marcha de holiday y lo deja a mi la llave a una oficina sabe
I: de modo que va para limpiar
M: si
I: espera un momentito que yo voy a yo voy a
M: bueno ...
I: le voy a leer I wish to appeal against your demand of ninety six pound ninety six I returned the book to the office in lisson grove on the 13th of april I started work on the 5th of april I cashed the cheque for the week of the fifth
M: yeah
I: because I did not have the money to pay my rent
M: yeah
I: to buy food for myself and my daughter
M: that's it
I: I did not cash it after that
M: nothing no eat one penny him
I: uh
M: no eat one no deja a mi one penny s crazy locos

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FIRST AND FOREIGN LANGUAGE COMPOSING: A PROTOCOL-BASED STUDY

Valerie Arndt

Introduction

This paper reports a comparative, protocol-based study of the first (Chinese) and foreign (English) language writing processes of six postgraduate EFL students. The study revealed the approaches of the six writers to the task of producing academic written discourse to be very different, and suggested that if composing strategies of individual writers were effective or otherwise in L1, they were likely to be so too in L2. Thus it appeared that factors relating to cognitive capacity were more relevant than linguistic proficiency where writing processes were concerned. At the same time however, a common source of difficulty in both writing tasks, and deficiency in the resulting texts, even for those with proficient writing strategies, was found to be an inadequate awareness of the nature of written language and the demands its production makes upon the writer.

First and foreign language composing: a protocol-based study

A sense of dissatisfaction over the teaching of writing, predominantly in first language teaching situations, since that is where most of the research to date has been done, but also increasingly in foreign/second language teaching, is immediately apparent from even a cursory review of the literature in this field. This uneasiness stems from an awareness that educational practices relating to this 'integrative activity involving many complex procedures' (Martlew 1983 p xiii) have often failed in the past, and are still failing, to address the psychological and cognitive processes intrinsic to the task; they have tended to deal with surface manifestations of precision, order and correctness of finished product, rather than with the imprecision, disorder and errors of what is increasingly perceived to be the much more crucial process underlying text generation and production.

Young (1978) has suggested the term 'current-traditional' as a convenient label for the paradigm which he argues has dominated the teaching of writing for several decades. Its 'prescriptive and orderly view of the creative act' (Hairston 1982 p 78) neglects the importance of discovering ideas and creating meaning; its faith in pre-planning and outlining before writing commences indicates a belief that writers know exactly what they want to say before they start; its stress on the orderly progression of writing through stages of pre-writing/writing/re-writing indicates a conception of the writing process as linear; and the importance attached to editing and proof-reading skills leads to a notion of writing as simple rule-applying rather than as a demanding intellectual activity which can be a significant means of learning. As a 'static and unexamined approach' to the teaching of writing, its main weakness is seen to lie in the fact that its proponents have 'not tested it against the composing processes of actual writers' (Hairston 1982 p 78).

However, over the last two decades, there has gradually developed a repudiation of the beliefs and emphases associated with this paradigm, and a change of approach to the teaching of writing which has come to be characterised as 'process centred'. The focus has turned from the 'what' of writing to the 'how' (Barritt and Kroll 1978); attempts have been made to understand how writing abilities develop, and to account for the perceived lack of success in teaching writing in the school or institutional setting (Britton et al 1975; Freedman et al 1983; Galbraith 1981; Wason 1981); and the cognitive nature of the writing activity has been emphasised, with cognitive psychologists claiming that aspects of its complexity can best be understood in terms of a specialised form of problem solving, and the development of writing abilities in terms of the development of certain types of cognitive capacity (Bracewell 1981; Barritt and Kroll 1978; Cooper and Matsuhashi 1983; Flower and Hayes 1981; Gregg and Steinberg 1980; Martlew 1983).

To the extent that L2 writing pedagogy has been based on the traditional, product centred L1 writing pedagogy, with its excessive emphasis on form and correctness to the neglect of generation of ideas and creation of meaning, then there is certainly much to be gained from the new awareness in L1 teaching of what writing actually involves, and the resultant orientation towards process. However, a preoccupation with process at the expense of product has its own dangers. Written language,

by virtue of its nature as 'language in writing' (Ludwig 1983), has influences upon the activities leading to its production which are universal and transcend differences in tongues across geographical and regional linguistic barriers. For writers in a foreign language, the problem is 'how to textualise discourse in a different language' (Widdowson 1983 p 45). Knowledge about writing-as-activity acquired in the first language has to be realised through knowledge of writing-as-text manifested in linguistic rules of the foreign language, rules relating not only to correctness of syntax or spelling at sentence level, but also to textual conventions of genre, coherence and formality at discourse level.

Nystrand (1982) underlines the importance of this latter kind of knowledge in his claim that:

> the resources of discourse are not ancillary to cognition, but actually shape the possibilities for and hence the conduct of discourse itself ... language is the *sine qua non* of discourse. Hence there is more to writing research than the study of written discourse processes. (p 7)

To recognise this, and to recognise that the acquisition of such knowledge of the resources of the written language for discourse may be the area where L2 writers (at least at the level of those in the study reported here) need most guidance, is by no means to denigrate the contributions of the 'process approach' to EFL writing pedagogy. As Zamel (1983) points out, the assumption of such an approach - that we find out how best to teach if we discover more about how learners learn - parallels the assumptions behind much recent second language acquisition research. Furthermore, it parallels the stress which such research lays on the individuality of learners with their differing needs, abilities, rates of learning, cognitive styles and learning strategies. Its advocation of a less prescriptive approach than that of product centred methodology, its appreciation of the need to view writing as essentially a problem solving undertaking rather than a rule applying exercise or creative accident, its insistence on the non-linear nature of the writing process - all these can only be beneficial.

Yet doubts remain as to whether this process is completely accessible to consciousness and hence observable. A production process, if not

necessarily linear, is nonetheless evolutionary, for the very concept of process involves some kind of movement from one stage to the next. Something which did not exist at the outset is produced through a series of operations which involve gradual change. How this evolution occurs in writing depends ultimately on what Britton et al (1975) refer to as 'the dialectical interpenetration of language and thought' (p47), and this most crucial part of the process is difficult, if not impossible to access. Nevertheless, there are manifestations of other types of operation contributing to this evolutionary process which are more accessible, and it is with these that the present study is largely concerned.

In the framework of the current interest in writing as process, both in L1 and L2 contexts, and in view of the present paucity of comparative studies, it was hoped that a study of the activities of writers writing both in their native and foreign languages might help to elucidate similarities and differences between the two processes, and suggest areas of priority for teaching L2 writing. Conclusions from research so far into the processes of L2 writing suggest that they are, despite the additional linguistic burdens involved, very similar to those of L1 writing. Difficulties of L2 writers stem from the constraints of the composing activity, or of discourse type, rather than simply the mechanics of language; successes of proficient L2 writers result from effective strategies of text generation and evaluation, and not merely linguistic fluency. Furthermore, composing skills of proficient L2 writers are very similar to those of proficient L1 writers. The study reported here suggests as a corollary of this that, in the cases of individual writers, where such skills are efficient and effective in their L1 writing, they are likely to be so too in their L2 writing, thus implying that factors relating to cognitive capacity and style may be more relevant than linguistic proficiency in accounting for the way in which a written text is produced.

Design and limitations of the study

The six students who took part in the study were Chinese native speaking EFL students in their final year of postgraduate study at Nankai University in Tianjin, China. Ability to write proficiently in English was important to them, their academic competence often being judged on the basis of their written L2 performance. The study examined their

composing activities and the resulting texts as they wrote first in Chinese and then in English, with the primary aim of comparing the L1 and L2 composing processes. In order to do this, the procedures of protocol analysis were followed, whereby the students were asked to 'compose aloud' into tape recorders in individual booths in the language laboratory. The different types of composing activity thus recorded on the resulting 'protocols' were later categorised and coded according to a scheme based on that developed by Perl (1979, 1981), and the coded activities of each protocol were entered upon composing style sheets. (A list of coding categories used can be found in figure 1.)

Reducing the information on the tapes to chart form in this way can be considered at once a weakness and a strength of this method of protocol analysis. Since the validity of any conclusions drawn from it depends upon how satisfactorily and consistently the composing activities are categorised and coded, the coding of the protocols is obviously the crucial part of the whole operation. Its weakness lies not only in the fact that judgements made by the coder often have to depend upon inferences drawn from what is verbalised, but also that the writers manifest varying degrees of capacity for, and consistency of, verbalisation. On the other hand, however, a concise, standardised and categorical basis is provided for discerning the patterns and styles of each writer's composing process; sequencing and frequency of various operations can be readily perceived; and comparisons both between writers, and between each individual writer's approaches to different tasks, are facilitated.

Besides the necessarily inferential nature of judgements made in the analysis, probing composing processes in this way has other drawbacks. Amongst them is the unreality and unfamiliarity of the task of composing aloud, which, quite apart from the strain of performing two tasks at once - composing aloud and composing, almost certainly interferes with normal composing activities (Faigley and Witte 1981); second, there is the artificiality of the rhetorical context of the writing[1]; third, there is the incompleteness of the account yielded by protocols, since certain contributory operations in the processes of thought and articulation of meaning in language are simply unavailable to conscious awareness; and finally, there is the curious paradox that although protocols represent an attempt to probe a process underlying a product, they are themselves products of a different process - that of introspection[2].

Nevertheless, think-aloud procedures are recognised, in general, as a useful means of tracing cognitive processes, especially when the information to be verbalised is stored in a verbal code, as is the case with writing (Ericsson and Simon 1980 p 227); and, in particular, the variety of information yielded by the revelations of the protocols in the present study suggests that, whilst protocol analysis can in no way provide a complete account of normal composing processes, it may, nevertheless, have considerable value for teachers in indicating problems to be addressed in the classroom, and for students in raising levels of awareness about what the activity of writing involves.

Six writers: six approaches

A key issue in recent second language acquisition research has been how the individual needs of language learners impose the need for flexibility in teaching in order to accommodate differing cognitive capacities, cognitive styles and motivational factors. As far as writing is concerned, Wason (1981) has suggested that we would be very wrong to suppose that there is one best way to understand how people write. Likewise, it would seem foolhardy to propose that there is one best way to teach writing, for one of the most interesting revelations of the protocols was the extent to which the writers differed from each other in their approaches to the same tasks, although each writer's strategies for composing remained consistent across languages. Supposedly relatively homogeneous as a group[3], the six writers as individuals demonstrated as great a variety of style in composing process as in finished composition, and a matching range of problems and deficiencies to be addressed in any hypothetical writing programme.

One of them for instance, the 'outliner', needed the entire writing session in one task to orient herself towards her chosen topic, producing no text proper at all, only a series of outlines. Her natural instinct seemed to be to let the writing activity generate her ideas, but she smothered it with consciously learned 'outlining' and 'topic sentence' procedures. Another, in contrast, started on his text in the very first minute, with virtually no orientation period. He was a 'lister', for whom writing was a process of filling up the paper with fragments of ideas as they occurred, generating large quantities of text but without concern for how the items on the list

might fit into an overall structure of meaning. A third writer seemed to find writing a relatively effortless and spontaneous activity. The 'reviser', she not only paid attention to how her total text was evolving throughout the process, but appeared to be able to monitor her progress as she wrote more successfully than the rest. In contrast to her, the 'struggler' found writing an especially painful and deliberate process. Her protocols revealed the constant wrestle she was involved in to make sure the words she transcribed actually reflected the meaning she had in mind. The remaining two provide a different kind of contrast. The overriding concern of one, the 'thinker', was to get to the logical heart of his ideas, and make sure that what he wrote made rational sense. Whereas he needed no written plan or outline, he spent considerable time **thinking** about what he was aiming to say. The other one, however, the 'planner', seemed to be able to write nothing without first tracing out elaborate superstructural frameworks - introduction, main points, examples to support, conclusion - as he had apparently been taught. Yet, his texts as they evolved did not fit the preconceived frameworks, neither did the plans seem to help in the production of the actual text.

The protocols thus appeared to confirm the expectation that the processes of writing (at this level) would remain consistent, irrespective of whether L1 or L2 were being used as the medium, such that if strategies for text generation and production were efficient or otherwise in L1 writing, they would tend to be so too in L2 writing. At the same time, they revealed how different these processes were in individual cases.

Three problems in common

Limitations of space preclude an exhaustive analysis of other disclosures from the protocols - confirmations of how the least precise pre-planning seems in general to make for the easiest generation of text, for instance (cf Rose's 1980 study); or of how the enormous generative power of the actual activity of writing leads to a wide range of discoveries relating to finding a focus for discussion, organising ideas, and clarifying concepts; or of how far from the reality of the composing act is a linear, 'stage-process' model (Flower and Hayes 1981) of the process.

There are three areas, however, highlighted by the protocols, which might usefully be specified. The problems pertaining to them appear to

be common to all the writers, in both tasks, and have to do with the difficulties of meeting the demands made by the production of language-in-writing, especially such language in its transactional function of academic exposition (the type the writers in the study were called upon to produce). They relate to coherence, critical self-awareness, and commitment.

The construction of overall coherence of meaning has often been noted as perhaps the most essential element of a completed text, and yet the most taxing aspect of its production. The protocols revealed the strategies of the writers in this respect to be inadequate. They had a severely restricted concept of global planning, being overly concerned with superstructural formats of paragraphs and points at the expense of shaping the meaning relationships underpinning them. Their revision strategies were, by and large, related only to meaning at a local level, with the translation, that is, of immediate thought into word. There appeared to be little effort to find the shape or form of the overall argument (doubtless partly on account of the time constraints they were working under), and asssessment or evaluation of how the text as a whole was evolving was virtually non-existent. Yet the protocols also revealed that, in many cases, the necessary cues for creating this coherence were there in the writers' thoughts; the difficulty was in accessing these cues and transposing them into written form. This, it would appear, tends to support Galbraith's (1981) observation that written thought often seems 'impoverished' in comparison with the reflective thought that led to its creation. It might also suggest a possible role for protocol analysis as an instrument whereby writers might be helped to capture from their thoughts the coherence missing from their texts. (Figure 2 contains an example of a sentence from one of the written texts, together with its accompanying protocol, to illustrate this discrepancy.)

The second problem area common to all the writers concerns their capacity to be critical of their texts. Writers need to evaluate the language they choose to convey their meaning in writing, in terms of whether it is explicit and autonomous enough to enable its intended reader to recreate that meaning in its entirety. The protocols suggest that the awareness required for such evaluation was inadequate, or at least under-exploited by the writers in the study. They did not, on the whole,

demonstrate mastery of what Martlew (1983) refers to as the 'metalinguistic' and 'metacognitive' skills (p306) which enable a writer to stand back from the text, re-view it with the reader's eyes, and make sure that message is adequately geared to audience.

Finally, the question of commitment. Writing is by its nature an act of public commitment whereby private thought is given potentially permanent form as a linguistic artefact. Effective writing, however, is an act of personal commitment, involving a 'confrontation with the self' without which writers cannot 'free themselves from the tutelage of sterotyped models to which they assume they should conform' (Wason 1981 p361). The **texts** in the study, produced in an artificial rhetorical context of 'essay making' (Nystrand 1982) and without a genuine purpose, suggest little serious effort by the writers to struggle towards what Galbraith (1981) terms a 'private', as opposed to an 'institutional' conception of what they were writing about. Yet the **protocols** contain a much richer range of evaluations, judgements and opinions, the incorporation of which into the texts would have led to that commitment to an attitude towards what was being written about, felt to be one of the measures of quality, even in academic writing, that ostensibly most sober of genres.

A final implication

Since the focus of this comparative study was on writing processes, its primary concern was not with evaluation of the written products (which, with one exception, were in any case incomplete). Yet process and product are inextricably intertwined, for the activities which are responsible for a text's production are, to a considerable degree, determined by the very nature of written language. Knowing more about **how** written texts come into being may indeed help teachers address relevant problems, particularly those of writers with ineffective composing strategies. The harsh fact remains, however, that writers are judged ultimately by **what** they produce, and here the writer's knowledge of the resources of the language and how to manipulate them to create effective written text seems at least as important as proficient writing strategies. At the heart of the endeavour of producing language-in-writing lies the creation of meaning through successful fusion of

thought and language, to achieve which with increasing effectiveness requires an ever more sophisticated knowledge of the resources of the language being used as a medium of expression. This, it is suggested, cannot be attained by any writer, least of all those writing in a non-native language, solely as a result of greater attention being paid to the processes of writing.

Notes

1. The writers were asked to write expositions of various aspects of life in modern China in the form of an article for a Chinese university magazine in the first task, and for an English university audience in the second. Consciously or unconsciously, however, they quite rightly perceived the true purpose of their writing to be to provide data for analysis, often addressing remarks in the protocols to myself.

2. Besides the general limitations of protocol analysis, there was the specific drawback in the present study of unavoidable time constraints, resulting from restrictions on the availablity of laboratory facilities: the two tasks were performed too closely together, in one-hour sessions separated only by a short break; there was virtually no opportunity for an 'incubation' or 'gestation' period, acknowledged to be of fundamental importance in the total process; and there was little opportunity for redrafting (only one of the six writers completed even a first draft).

3. Objective measures of linguistic and academic achievement were unavailable. It had to be assumed, therefore, that the writers, by virtue of having reached their final year of postgraduate study in one of China's 'key' universities, had considerable proficiency in both respects.

Figure 1: Coding categories and symbols

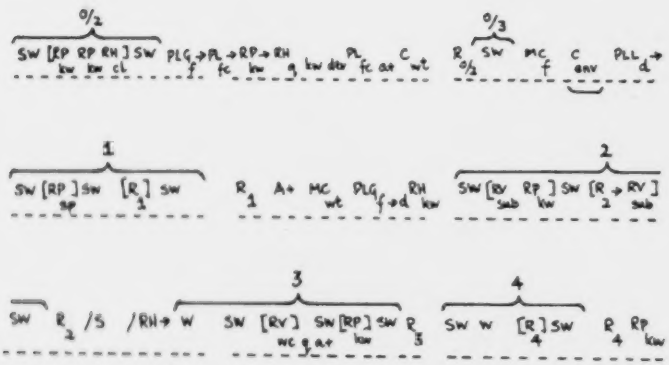
Major categories

PL	planning (finding a focus, deciding what to write about)
PLG	global planning (deciding how to organise total text)
PLL	local planning (deciding how to organise parts of text)
RH	rehearsing (trying out ideas and language to express them)
RH—›W	rehearsing leading directly to writing
W	writing
SW	speaking words as they are being written
SM	speaking miscue (mismatch between graphic and verbalised records)
R	reading what has been written
RM	reading miscue (mismatch between graphic and verbalised records)
RP	repeating words or phrases
SC	scanning back over text so far
RV	revising (making changes for meaning)
E	editing (making changes for formal correctness of syntax, spelling etc)
A	assessing (global); A(-) = negative; A(+) = positive
Q	questioning
C	commenting (on matters extraneous to writing task)
MC	metacommenting (showing awareness of writing task)
S	silence
I	intervention irrelevant to writing task
U	unintelligible remark

Subscripts

a	assessing (local)
add	addition
aud	audience
c	content
ca	composing aloud
dev	development of new idea
cl	clarification of old idea
el	elaboration of old idea
d	direction (writers give themselves)
del	deletion
ex	example
end	ending
env	environment
f	form (arrangement of paragraphs)
fc	focus
kw	keyword
l	language (formality or appropriacy)
lw	last word (written or spoken)
np	next/new paragraph
npt	next/new point
o	outline
orth	orthography (legibility)
q	question
reo	reordering
sp	spelling
st	how to start
stt	statement
sty	style
sub	substitution
t	topic
tr	translation of term/concept
wc	word choice
wl	writer's life
wt	writing task (present one)

Figure 2: Sample of part of a composing style sheet



TIME-LINE	each sequence of broken lines = 1 minute of composing time
NUMERALS	refer to segment of outline or text proper (usually segmented by sentence)
HORIZONTAL BRACKETS	above time-line = graphic recording of segment of outline or text proper
HORIZONTAL BRACKETS	below time-line = verbalisation in a language different from that being used for the written text
VERTICAL BRACKETS	indicate that composing operations are interrupting graphic recording
OBLIQUE SLASHES	enclose periods of silence or outside intervention
ARROW (—›)	indicates an operation occurring as a direct result of the previous one

Figure 3: Coherence of thought not reflected in written text

Sentence from one of the Chinese texts (in translation):

> (As far as) the open-door policy, and being open to the influence of the new technological revolution (is concerned), we need large numbers of reformers with the pioneering spirit, who have the daring and the ability to adjust their own production according to whatever the market changes may be,* this is mainly because of the bondage of tradition.

Verbalisation in the protocol which accompanied the writing of this sentence at the point marked *:

> but we have really few of such kinds of people in modern China. If we speak of the present situation, of course we can't say that there aren't ANY ...but ...why should this be so? Most important is because of the 'Doctrine of the Mean', the traditional outlook, this is mainly because of the bondage of tradition.

(The underlined words in the above quotation are those which were transcribed graphically as they were verbalised.)

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NON-NATIVENESS IN SECOND LANGUAGE TEXTS: THE SYNTAX FACTOR

Marie-Paule Woodley
University of Manchester

That non-native texts 'deviate' from the corresponding native norm is obvious to all second and foreign language teachers, most of whom see it as their task precisely to guide learners toward a more native-like performance. One approach to the characterisation of these 'deviations' - itself a fundamental step in the planning of intervention in the language-learning process - has been the systematic analysis of errors, and it is an indication of the 'privileged' status of syntactic problems that most error analyses have concentrated on them. Syntactic error analyses, however, have tended to look at syntax as a sentence phenomenon, purely in terms of grammaticality, and not as one of the means of establishing coherence. This paper seeks to arrive at an understanding of the 'deviant' character of a set of non-native texts by looking closely at how sentence syntax realises - and affects - textual functions. The questions asked therefore are not only: 'Is non-native syntax different?' and 'In what way?', but 'Do writers do different things with syntax in their L1 and in their L2?' and 'Is what they do different from what native speakers of L2 do?'

Two broad groups of syntactic phenomena will be considered, both of which have been the object of much recent research on their links with textual functions: firstly, subordination, and secondly, 'marked structures', such as passives and clefts (see Lautamatti 1978 and Tomlin 1985 on subordination, Prince 1978, Borkin 1984 and Lambrecht 1985 on clefts). They can be looked at as some of the devices that make a text *explicitly* coherent, a highly valued characteristic in the type of academic writing I am concerned with (see Reinhart 1980 on explicit coherence, Lakoff 1984 on the cultural value attached to certain linguistic choices). In this paper I will concentrate on the following ways in which syntax can be seen as contributing to explicit coherence:

1. linking: the establishment of explicit links between propositions;

2. foregrounding/backgrounding (within sentence or within discourse);

3. topic selection/continuity

4. focus marking.

The data for this exploratory contrastive study consist of three sets of texts:

F = 'native' French texts (13 subjects, 5975 words)

EL1 = 'native' English texts (15 subjects, 9165 words)

EF = 'non-native' French texts (same 15 subjects as EL1, 5985 words)

The task required the subjects to take sides in a debate current at the time of the data collection, backing their argument with elements drawn from simple statistical data provided.

A first answer to the question: 'is non-native syntax different?' can be sought by looking at T-unit length in words. A T-unit is a syntactic unit consisting of a main clause plus any subordinate clause or non-clausal structure that is attached to or embedded in it (Hunt 1970). T-unit length works as an - albeit very rough - index of syntactic complexity since the number of words tends to grow with the number of dependent clauses. The mean T-unit lengths for my data are as follows: F = 21.7 words/T-unit, EL1 = 24.4 words/T-unit, EF = 19.5 words/T-unit. As could be expected, the English subjects write considerably longer T-units in their native language than in French. There is also a gap between EF and F, though it is narrower. The figures point - in a somewhat atypically subdued manner compared with other studies by this author - to the existence of a difference in levels of syntactic complexity between the three sets of data. This cannot be equated in any direct way with any textual function as there is rarely a one to one relationship between syntactic form and textual function. For example, in the case of the first of the textual functions listed above, namely **linking**, because propositions within a given text are expected to 'go together',

juxtaposition can suffice to establish the link. Propositions can also be joined by link words, as in:

> (1) En Grande-Bretagne, le gouvernement aide l'éducation supérieure en payant pour les jeunes à aller aux établissements d'éducation supplémentaire. Aux Etats-Unis, par contraste, ce sont les jeunes eux-mêmes et leurs familles qui doivent payer, alors ça laisse le gouvernement avec plus d'argent à dépenser sur l'éducation. (EF)

There can clearly be, therefore, no direct relation between syntactic complexity and 'linking density'. A higher index of syntactic complexity may, however, reflect the amount of **syntactic linking** in a text. And syntactic linking is linking with a difference: with juxtaposition the type of link is not made explicit and all the propositions are on the same plane; with link words the semantic nature of the links is made clear but there is still no hierarchy; subordination on the other hand can combine explicit link and hierarchy, in the sense that one proposition is seen in relation to another, as the following example illustrates:

> (2) Although - as the case of Germany shows - economic performance is not always directly related to the age at which people leave the educational system, the perpetuation of such short-sighted policies can only bring economic disaster upon our country in an age which should be one of optimism. (EL1)

Whereas (1) provides adequate linking with *par contraste* and *alors* but no hierarchical structuring of its three propositions, (2), thanks to a two level dependency structure, makes it clear that the extract is not about Germany, nor economic performance, but about previously described policies concerning higher education.

A way of looking at this creation of depth or relief in text is in terms of the second in our list of textual functions: **foregrounding/ backgrounding**. Following Tomlin (1985:89), we characterise **foreground information** as 'information which is more central or salient or important to the discourse theme', which bears 'a stronger thematic relation of significance to its superordinate discourse theme'. **Background information** is 'information which elaborates or

develops foreground information', which bears 'a weaker thematic relation of significance to its superordinate discourse theme'. It is stressed that the foreground/background distinction is not to be seen as a simple binary concept but as a continuum. In a study of three types of narratives based on a video recording, Tomlin finds that a great majority of dependent clauses (regardless of their absolute frequency, which is determined by stylistic factors) code background information, while main clauses regularly code foreground information.

Beyond the possibility of taking T-unit length as a rough index of 'relief-creation' in text, these findings led me to look at my data from a slightly different angle: is there a difference in the way syntax is used to code foreground and background information in native and non-native texts? The task designed for the data collection specifically requested subjects to combine two textual activities - ie *argument* backed up by *commentary* (cf statistical data provided) - the commentary element being as it were informationally embedded in the argument. Following Tomlin's suggestion that main clauses and dependent clauses represent different types of information, two predictions were formulated:

- main clauses (and simple sentences) could be expected to be used preferentially for:

  (a) 'framing' statistical data;
  (b) stating opinions;

- straight reporting of statistics would be more likely to occur in dependent clauses.

To start with **framing**, I counted as **framing** expressions phrases signalled by *on/nous + noter, remarquer, constater*, etc, or by impersonal constructions such as *il apparait, il convient de noter, it would appear*, etc:

> (3) Il apparait également que c'est aux USA que le pourcentage du PNB consacré aux dépenses publiques dans l'enseignement supérieur public est le plus fort. (F)

(4) En étudiant ce tableau, on s'aperçoit qu'il existe une différence importante entre l'âge moyen à l'entrée... (F)

Opinion expressions were those signalled by *je pense, I think, believe,* etc; *selon moi, à mon avis, in my opinion,* etc; by modals such as *falloir, should,* etc; or by lexical items such as *essential, intolerable,* etc.[1]

(5) ...selon moi la démocratisation de l'enseignement supérieur est un facteur de progrès pour un pays. (F)

(6) I think it would be a great shame to let the standards lapse now. (EL1)

(7) Par contre, il nous faut augmenter nos dépenses afin d'améliorer le système d'enseignement. (EF)

Table 1 shows the results of the analysis of main clauses in terms of **framing** and **opinion**. As hypothesised, these two functions occupy a large percentage of main clauses in all three data sets, but considerably more so in L1 (French and English) than in L2. The table also shows that the distribution of **framing** to **opinion**, similar in F and EF, differs greatly in EL1, with a much higher proportion of **opinion** main clauses. It is noteworthy that the non-native texts, with fewer main clauses involved and a higher proportion of **framing** clauses, express opinion only half as often as the native texts by the same writers.

Table 1: Percentage of 'framing' and 'opinion' main clauses

			% framing/opinion	
F	framing: 17.4%	44.7%	38.9%	61.1%
	opinion: 27.3%			
EL1	framing: 10.5%	47.5%	22.1%	77.9%
	opinion: 37.0%			
EF	framing: 13.9%	33.1%	42.0%	58.0%
	opinion: 19.2%			

Table 2 throws a different light on these figures: it shows the occurrence of straight - ie not interpreted or evaluated - accounts of elements from the statistical data:

Table 2: Straight account of statistics

	% in main clauses	% in dependent clauses	% of all T-units
F	45.6%	54.5%	31.8%
EL1	43.8%	56.2%	16.2%
EF	57.5%	42.5%	25.4%

The smaller proportion of EF main clauses expressing opinion may partly be accounted for by the fact that a good deal more are just reporting figures. It is also interesting to see, although this may be more closely related to the fascinating field of contrastive rhetoric than to the immediate concern of this paper, that the English subjects make considerably less use of the statistical data in their native texts than in their French texts, and that the French writers cling the most to the data provided (cf right hand column of table 2). As far as the study of non-nativeness is concerned, the figures in tables 1 and 2 converge to suggest that the three data sets exhibit such a different balance of fact vs opinion that they may legitimately be seen as representing different text types, a very important consideration indeed in the pedagogy of written communication.

I shall now return to syntactic dependency, and illustrate its link with the third textual function under consideration - **topic selection and continuity** - with four examples of accounts of statistics:

> (8) Il se passe le phénomène inverse en Grande-Bretagne, pays où le taux de scolarisation de la population âgée de 19 à 24 ans est le plus faible, où l'âge moyen à la sortie du système d'enseignement est le plus bas, où le taux d'accroissement des

dépenses publiques relatives à l'enseignement superieur est le plus faible mais où au contraire le pourcentage du PNB consacré aux dépenses publiques dans l'enseignement supérieur public est assez élevé en comparaison avec celui des autres pays. (F)

(9) The figures clearly reveal that the British education system suffers the most in relation to the annual rate of increase of public expenditure, the British figure being only 8.12% compared with Sweden and France, for example, whose governments spend an annual increase of 28.9 and 24.7% on higher education respectively. (EL1)

(10) Britain has the lowest percentage of 19-24 year olds in full time education. This means that the majority of people in Britain do not go on to full time further education, and this is backed up by the figures in the second table, since the average leaving age in British schools is 17.7 years. (EL1)

(11) En Grande-Bretagne moins de la population âgée de 19 à 24 ans font l'enseignement supérieur qu'en France (9.3% en Grande-Bretagne, 12.3% en France). Mais le pourcentage du P.N.B. consacré aux dépenses publiques dans l'enseignement supérieur est plus grand en Grande-Bretagne (0.89%) qu'en France (0.43%). Au Japon 14.7% de la population âgée de 19 à 24 ans ont été admis au système d'enseignement supérieur, mais le pourcentage du P.N.B. n'est que 0.38%. (EF)

Whereas in (8) and (9) the figures are integrated, motivated by the point the writer is making, and backgrounded in relation to this point, in (10) the figures precede the point ('This means...'), and the 'data' sentence is given the same weight as the interpretive one. In (11), which is a complete paragraph, the succession of elements from the statistical tables in simple sentences leaves the reader with a great deal of inferring to do in order to guess the writer's point. More specifically, the reader may wonder whether the paragraph is about Britain or Japan, about numbers in higher education or percentage of GNP: the succession of simple sentences has an impact on a fundamental aspect of textual functioning: **topic selection and continuity**. The link between syntactic

complexity and topic selection and continuity will not be further investigated here, but it seems reasonable to conjecture that lower syntactic complexity may lead to greater proliferation of topics and therefore to more difficult reader-identification of main discourse topics[2].

The notion of topic continuity is basic to an understanding of the first of the **marked structures** under consideration in this study: the **passive**, which is seen as a way of matching syntactic structure and information structure, by allowing the topical element to occur in the grammatical function most normally associated with sentence topic:

> (12) The United States' figures represent the longest time for pupils to stay in the education system: that is 16.7 years on average are spent by a pupil at school. (EL1)
>
> (13) This is reflected in the second set of statistics showing that the British school leaving age is on average much lower than elsewhere. (EL1)
>
> (14) In the majority of the countries in the tables, an increased investment in education can be seen. (EL1)
>
> (15) ...the system of higher education ...can be of great benefit to the individual. On entering ..., he or she is being afforded the chance of self-fulfilment... (EL1)

(12) is particularly striking. Its oddness seems to indicate that ensuring topic continuity was very much the primary concern of the writer (a native speaker). The use of the passive as a topic continuity device is found in the three sets of data, with the following frequencies (calculated per 100 words):

F 0.36/100 words

EL1 1.28/100 words

EF 0.18/100 words

The abundance of passives in EL1 as opposed to F and EF prompts several remarks and questions. In contrastive terms, it suggests that the topic continuity devices used by English and French writers are markedly different, and points to specific directions for research which should be of a contrastive nature, both intra-lingual - different text types - and inter-lingual - eg French/English. For the present study of non-nativeness, the figures indicate that there is no simple transfer of items reflecting textual strategies - even when, as is the case of the passive - it is linguistically possible. It could be hypothesised that these advanced learners are in fact more influenced by the target 'norm', represented by the F texts, than by their L1, to the extent that they overshoot that norm considerably, using passives only half as much as the F group. The question for the characterisation of non-nativeness then is: what topic continuity devices - if any - do English writers use in their French texts to compensate for this strikingly low use of passives (half as many as F, just over one seventh of the EL1 frequency figure)? The beginnings of an answer may perhaps be suggested by the inordinately frequent, and often textually inappropriate, use of **on** in EF texts. **On** seems to be perceived by EF writers as an equivalent for their L1 passive, but while it does share certain features with that construction, it is no good as a topic continuity device. This will be the subject of further research, not to be reported in this paper.

The second and last marked structure to be examined is a group of constructions occurring in both English and French and known as **clefts**. The sub-classification into two main types holds for both languages, with great structural similarities. Occurrences of the type illustrated by example 16, generally called **pseudo-cleft**, though common to all three data sets, are too few to permit any generalisation and will not be analysed:

(16) What remains to be seen is whether the government will change its policy. (EL1)

The other type, which will simply be called **cleft**, is seen in examples 17 to 19 below:

(17) The figures clearly reveal that the British education system suffers the most in relation to the annual rate of increase

of public expenditure... compared with Sweden and France... Again it is the British education system which is contracting the most in view of the amount of money consecrated to it. (EL1)

(18) En 65 et 70, c'est en France que le pourcentage est le plus bas, ...; mais en 74, c'est l'Italie qui détient le plus faible pourcentage, suivie du Japon; on peut noter que c'est le Japon qui connait la plus faible progression... (F)

(19) En ce qui concerne le taux moyen d'accroissement annuel des dépenses publiques relatives à l'enseignement supérieur public de 1965 à 1970, il est à voir que ce sont la Suède et la France qui dépensent le plus d'argent pour l'enseignement supérieur et que c'est la Grande-Bretagne qui dépense seulement 8.12%... (EF)

Most remarkable about clefts is their frequency in F, which is three times greater than in EL1 and twice the figure for EF (table 3). Again there appears to be a clear difference between English and French native texts, which warrants a closer look at what clefts actually do in texts.

Table 3: Clefts

	Frequency per 100 words	% informative presupposition	% stressed focus
F	0.40/100 w	91%	9%
EL1	0.13/100 w	54%	46%
EF	0.20/100 w	81%	19%

A cleft is generally characterised as a focus -marking device, with the most precise definition given in Lambrecht (1984:8-9): 'a syntactic device by which a constituent whose referent plays the pragmatic role of focus in a proposition but whose normal position does not mark it as focal is allowed to appear in the preferred post-verbal position for foci via

creation of an additional or "auxiliary" clause containing the copula **être**, in whose free focus position the constituent can "appear".' The corollary of a focal IT/C'-clause, however, is not necessarily an informationally low-status WH/QU-clause. Prince (1978) judiciously distinguishes between **stressed-focus cleft** and **informative presupposition cleft**: in the first, the WH-clause represents information which the speaker assumes the hearer knows or can deduce, but is not presumably thinking about; in the second, the WH-clause represents information which the speaker takes to be a known fact, though definitely not known to the hearer. This distinction proved essential in the contrastive analysis of my three sets of data, as it transpired (table 3) that not only do F subjects use three times more clefts than EL1 subjects, they also use them differently: whereas most F clefts are of the informative presupposition type (91%), almost half of EL1 clefts (46%) are of the stressed focus type (cf example 17). EF clefts mostly resemble F clefts, with a large number used to pick out a referent - usually a country - in the IT/C'-clause, and indicating its extreme position in a pre-mentioned scale in the WH/QU-clause (see examples 18 and 19). Contrasting with these 'local' clefts, the EL1 stressed focus clefts seem to perform the function identified by Borkin (1984) of foregrounding the whole clause within the surrounding discourse.

As regards clefts, it would therefore appear that it is frequency rather than use that distinguishes EF from F, with again no evidence of direct transfer from L1 to L2 in the English subjects. But many aspects of the textual function of clefts remain to be clarified, and a larger number of instances would be needed to substantiate these initial findings.

Conclusion

This exploratory study of syntax and textual function in native and non-native texts allows the following tentative conclusions: lower syntactic complexity may be related to lower linking density, to less topic selection and looser topic continuity, three important factors in the establishment of explicit coherence; more importantly perhaps, the different ways in which the groups used syntax to foreground and background elements within the sentence and within the text as a whole led them to produce quite distinct types of texts, 'doing different things'; finally, there

appeared to be little direct transfer of text-building devices from L1 to L2, and as far as passives and clefts were concerned, non-native texts were closer to F than to EL1 in terms of use, but differed considerably in terms of frequency. The evidence of considerable differences between text-building devices used by native writers of French and English calls for detailed contrastive research.

The exploratory nature of this study must again be stressed, and the suppression of individual differences must be seen as the result not of a research principle but of lack of space. The pedagogical message emerging from these tentative conclusions is that any **correction** of a learner's written syntax, or **any** form of intervention in it, which does not take into account the textual function of particular syntactic choices is bound to be insufficient, and may lead to the production of textual infelicities.

Footnotes

1. The unavoidably impressionistic nature of the list of markers for framing and opinion expressions points to the danger of circularity ever present in the field of funtional syntax (cf Tomlin 1985). All I can say is that relevant instances seemed easily identifiable.

2. cf Lautamatti 1978 on how texts which have had their syntax simplified for pedagogical reasons can prove to be more difficult to read.

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THE REPRESENTATION OF SPOKEN LANGUAGE IN EARLY READING BOOKS: PROBLEMS FOR L2 LEARNER READERS

Catherine Wallace
Ealing College of Higher Education

Introduction

My aim in this paper is to illustrate some of the difficulties faced by second language learners who are continuing to acquire English at the same time as they start to read simple extended English texts. The question that I shall particularly address is: how can writers of early reading material best help such learners to understand the relationship between spoken and written language; in other words what kinds of written texts in terms of the selection of particular stylistic features and the selection of a genre, most readily guide early L2 learners into the new medium? I shall use as illustrative data extracts from written texts, some of which are part of reading schemes for children, some written for older so-called remedial learners and some produced by adult learners themselves as part of a 'language experience' approach. I shall also refer to transcripts of several learner readers. (See pages 146 to 152.)

In talking of routes to reading - for either L1 or L2 learners - one has tended to come across two opposing views, which, even if not explicitly stated, emerge in certain materials and methodology. One view has it that written language closest stylistically to the learner's typical speech offers the best support for early reading, ie is more readily predicted as being in the learner's own speech repertoire. Such a view would seem to be represented in text extracts one and two taken respectively from a reading book in the Nippers series, and one produced, with adult learners in mind, by the Gatehouse Project.

Extract One

We stopped here summertime
Picked your peas summertime',

said Ma.
'Its winter now', said the farmer.
'Got nowhere to go wintertime'
Pa said, 'Chucked off the
airfield.'

Nippers, Christmas is a Baby

Extract Two

And when it gets to you,
if you can't read it
he just says,
'Right, forget about you.
Go over to the next one'
And, you know he's going along,
and say there's somebody
else like you,
he just says
'Forget about you'
and goes over to the next one.

Gatehouse, A good life, by Alan[1]

A view in principle opposed to written texts which are like speaking has been put forward by those who emphasise the autonomy of writing and speaking both formally and functionally (cf for example Stubbs 1980). Writing and speaking are, it is claimed, partly independent systems; writing is not dependent upon speaking. A pedagogic implication would seem to be that learner readers, rather than being invited to respond to written language as what they might typically say or hear day to day should be encouraged to see from the beginning that written language is different from speech. Goodman and Green (1977) note: 'Children expect what they find in written language to differ from what they would normally say'. Smith (1977) mentions this awareness (ie that speaking and writing are different) as one of the fundamental insights which children require before they can learn to read at all.

So, assuming that we agree with Smith (1978) that a teacher's role is to 'make reading easy', where does this leave teachers or writers of early

reading materials? If we resist writing which is 'like speaking', are we therefore thrown back on the kind of pseudo texts or 'readerese' typified by the much maligned Ladybird books to which the Nippers series, with its supposedly more natural language was an understandable reaction?

My own interest in the language of early reading books arises from my observation that individual learners' reading is very variable. Superficially simple texts, as judged, for instance, by large print, short readily decodable words and short sentences may be less readable than apparently more complex texts. One text may create greater difficulty than another of supposedly the same level of readability. Moreover, it has been noted, for example by Moon (1981), that readability formulae are virtually useless for texts used in the early stages of learning to read.

I shall begin by looking at some salient stylistic features of early reading books which I have selected because they appeared to create difficulty for several of my own learners, at times in ways that I had not anticipated. More interesting than the texts themselves are the learners' responses, as represented by miscues, learner comment and an occasional total resistance to the text.

In this interaction between L2 learner and written texts, we are able to discover something about:

1. the learner's current reading and learning strategies;
2. the learner's interlanguage development
3. features of texts which obstruct learners (all learners but especially L2 learners) in the early stages of learning to read, in particular attempts to represent the kind of informal language more typical of speech.

It is the third of these that I shall focus on in this paper.

Subjects and data collection

The subjects I shall refer to (two briefly, one in much more detail) are three young learners:

1. Sarla was aged 11 at the time. She had been in Britain for six years, was Gujerati speaking and beginning to learn to read in Gujerati. I taught her once a week for one term in her own school, where she was withdrawn for extra reading.
2. Yasmeen was 19, Urdu speaking from Pakistan and literate in Urdu. She had been in Britain for about a year at the start of my lessons with her. I taught her as part of a small literacy group for one academic year.
3. Amna is now 19, like Yasmeen an Urdu speaking Pakistani, but, unlike her, with minimal Urdu literacy and no experience of school before arriving at a local Further Education Centre after a year in Britain. Her spoken English is much more restricted than either Sarla or Yasmeen's and last September she was a total beginner to reading in English.

Amna was an interesting learner in that she continually commented on the structure and content of what we read together. Because of her readiness to engage with the text in this way, offering insights into the learning to read process not always so readily available to teachers, and because we simply had much more time together in a one to one teaching situation, most of the data will refer to her. Nearly all the sessions with each learner were taped beyond the very earliest and it is these transcripts that I shall refer to, together with the texts which we used. (See appendix for transcripts.)

For the purpose of this paper I shall classify key textual features as follows:

1. Reference
2. Colloquial usage
3. Non-standard forms
4. Contracted forms

1. Reference

Transcript 1 (Tom's accident) shows Amna's difficulty with reference, illustrated here by the item THAT. One source of difficulty is the extended reference: THAT refers not to a thing, as something visible and concrete, a single nominal readily identifiable in the text, but to

behaviour, an event ('Tom ran into the road'). The example is similar to that quoted in Halliday and Hasan (1976).

They broke the Chinese vase

That was - valuable

versus

That was - careless

The difficulty is compounded in transcript 1, by the fact that the reference is also very remote in the text.

Transcript 2 (A woman on her own) gives extracts from a similar discussion regarding reference, here centering on the meaning of THEY. The difficulty may be attributable to any one or all of several factors. Firstly Amna is not yet using this form in her own speech (at least I did not note any use of it); secondly, as revealed by her concluding comment (cf 1.39/40) she seems to be aware of its exophoric situational use, but possibly not of its referring use even in speech. To quote Simons and Murphy (1986): 'The use of deictic items in written text requires different processing strategies of children (and I would argue of adults in some L2 acquisition contexts) whose language experiences are mainly oral and who are accustomed to using the physical and temporal situations to anchor deictic items'. Or the difficulty may lie in the fact that Amna has understood 'Women on their own' as 'A woman on her own' and therefore anticipates the pronoun 'she' (cf 1.32). It is likely that Amna assumes the text is here describing an individual woman, ie the story teller featured in pictures which accompany the text, rather than a class of women (ie all women on their own), not representable through illustration.

The final example of reference difficulty is more clearly to do with the problems raised by written versions of more typically spoken usage and is illustrated by the use of YOU in transcript 3 ('Doing my flat up'). This instance of YOU is exophoric, in the sense that the roles of reader and writer are invoked. While the situational use of YOU in spoken face to face communication is of course very familiar to Amna, the sophisticated convention by which a writer may address a reader is quite alien to Amna. This is partly because the notion of authorship is still not very

clear to her. Also, she has become familiar with the more typical endophoric use of YOU in quoted speech, typical of written narratives where YOU can be retrieved from the text as in extract 3:

Extract Three

'Red Riding Hood comes in
She says, Look Grandma
I have some cake
and some flowers for you'
(Ladybird Read it yourself,Little Red Riding Hood)

Moreover, there is inconsistency within the text 'Doing my flat up'. For on a previous page to that quoted in transcript 3 there is another use of YOU, the generalised YOU=ONE, which is also an exophoric use. Extract 4 gives this example:

Extract Four

I use wood chip paper
and paint over it,
so you see the pattern.
(Centerprise, Doing my flat up)

The difficulties would seem to be created by the genre of this kind of first person narrative, in particular where the narrator I is also the author, as in these 'True Life' stories.

It should be added that Amna is beginning to acquire the concept of reference, as evidenced by her search in the text for some backward referent for THEY in transcript 2. This seemed to be confirmed by her spontaneous comment on the item IT, later in the same text.

Extract four

I go home and get a cup of tea
I sit down and drink it
(Gatehouse, A woman on her own)

Amna's response here, sotto voce and more to herself than to me is: 'Why not write here "tea"? Why write IT? Short way. It means tea.' To sum up so far then, where the reference is accessible, it allows learners the opportunity to verbalise about the way written texts show cohesion in English, as Amna does here. Difficulty arises in early texts where there is a remoteness or looseness of reference, a problem more likely to arise in genres such as first person narratives, which come close stylistically to certain kinds of informal speech.

2. Colloquial usage

One difficulty with YOU as a direct address to the reader is that this kind of personal address is usually, in writing, reserved for letters to friends, advertising and notices addressed generally to the public. Its use in transcript 3 represents a phatic feature more characteristic of face to face informal conversation. There is at least a consistency of tone in the text 'Doing my flat up', as evidenced by other phatic features, for example, fillers such as 'as you call it', in this extract:

Extract five

I buy ten rolls of paper.
It was 75p each
Then I buy the starch,
Or paste as you call it.

(Centerprise, Doing my flat up)

This is highly unpredictable as written text and of course to Amna's query at this point 'What means "as you call it"' there is no ready answer as, if we interpret it parenthetically, it is not part of the meaning of the text at all.

We find other kinds of representations of colloquial speech in the text 'Running Man' (cf transcript 4) Sarla's difficulty with DUNNO here does not stem from her unfamiliarity with informal spoken language as such (she is a fairly fluent speaker of English) but from her unfamiliarity with the way informal speech is conventionalised in writing. Sarla's resistance

to the text here makes the point, moreover, that even readily decodable words are balked at if, as Meek et al (1983) point out, the learner 'cannot make them mean'.

3. Non standard forms

The text 'Doing my flat up' also features non-standard as well as colloquial forms. Representation of both non-standard and colloquial language is found particularly in adult reading books which have followed a language experience approach, whereby the text results from the teacher, as scribe, rendering the written text so that it stays very close to the original oral version of the storyteller (the literacy student). It is likely that Alan's story (p2) resulted from this kind of process. Where the learner uses some non-standard, as well as colloquial forms of English, these may be maintained in the written version. In these learner produced books, one occasionally finds inconsistencies of forms (such as start v started and knew v knowed) within the same text. This presumably reflects variation within the learner's language system, and is consistent with a generally higher degree of variability in spoken language. Amna responded to the text in extract 6 by rendering it as it stood. Though this text was produced by a non-standard rather than a non-native speaker of English it may have matched quite closely Amna's own current interlanguage:

Extract six

I buy a can of putty
For fill the holes
My brother give me
Some brushes
So I never buy them

(Centerprise, Doing my flat up)

I also asked the seven-year-old sitting with us at the time (an Indian girl, with dominant English and a fluent young reader) to read aloud the same page, and, as I had expected, she translated it into standard. It seems that, just as non-standard or interlanguage speakers when reading fluently read standard texts in their own dialect or interlanguage (as discussed for

instance by Wallace 1986), standard speakers are likely to read non-standard forms in standard.

4. Contracted forms

The use of contracted forms is clearly consistent with a writer's decision to attempt a representation of spoken language in writing. One notes, however, frequent resistance on the part of learners to these forms, as illustrated in transcript 5 (Maria's trip through the system) where Yasmeen tends to fill out the structure (eg we'll - we will, line 4; I've - I have, line 9; I'm - I am, line 13). Alternatively she temporarily reveals a loss of sense of the text, by falling back on a decoding strategy to produce I - VE (to rhyme with IVY, line 16). Incidentally, Amna at one point decoded the contracted form of 'you have' in a similar way, ie as you - VE ('You - ve made me wet'). In her case it is likely that her English language competence was not sufficiently developed to allow her to recognise an underlying perfect form. Yasmeen, in giving the full form, displays a greater competence here. Research on L2 acquisition (cf for example Ellis 1986) suggests that full forms are typically acquired before contracted forms and this may well be one source of difficulty for L2 learners of the written representation of contracted forms.

Conclusion

I should like to make a few concluding comments under each of the headings discussed in this paper:

1. **Reference**. Reference needs to be accessible in texts for early L2 learner readers, so that items refer unambiguously to specific nominals readily retrievable from the text. We have seen that anaphora can create difficulty if there is a lengthy stretch of text before the pro-form occurs. An early reader simply cannot keep very much in short term memory. If the reference is accessible, learners, with a little guidance, are able to discover this cohesive feature of texts through reading itself.

2. **Colloquial usage.** There are several difficulties with writers' attempts to convey colloquial style in writing. Firstly such attempts, as exemplified by the case of DUNNO (transcript 4) result in highly stylised language which is likely to be obstructive to early learners who are still coming to terms with more typical forms of written language. Secondly, the very early learner reading in 'reading aloud' style with little of the pace or rhythm of informal speech will make little sense of writers' attempts to characterise spoken usage, such as the use of phatic markers or asides. It needs a skilled reader who will first survey the text to decide on an appropriate oral delivery for texts such as:

> Then I buy the starch
> Or paste as you call it
>
> (Centerprise, Doing my flat up)

3. **Non-standard texts.** The arguments against the use of non-standard language in early reading texts, even where the particular non-standard features are familiar to the L2 learner, are similar to those against the use of colloquial style. Firstly, it is hard to decide on a consistent orthography when attempting to represent essentially spoken varieties of language (cf for instance Roxy Harris (1979) who notes the absence of a definitive written form for Creole English.)

   Secondly, non-standard forms are not usually found in other written media with which the reader may already be familiar, such as simple notices or advertisements. Finally, as argued in this paper, there is the reader's likely existing expectation, established from even minimal experience of print, that written language is not like speaking. Thus, while in the longer term there is a strong case for legitimising forms of language other than standard in the classroom, there is, I would argue, also a case for avoiding non-standard and colloquial usage in texts for very early learner readers.

4. **Contracted forms**. Contracted forms are hard to avoid once dialogue is introduced. One would simply argue for consistency, with the higher frequency items, in the spoken medium, such as

'don't' and 'didn't' being introduced before those such as 'I've' which appear to create greater difficulty for L2 learners.

Overall, difficulties of selecting suitable texts can be partly resolved by choosing genres such as fables and folk or fairy tales where reference tends to be endophoric, and nominals to be repeated, and neither colloquial nor non-standard usage is part of the genre. When 'true life' biographies are used they would not necessarily lose their immediacy and credibility if they were adapted so as to make them more typically written texts, with consistent structure and greater cohesiveness.

We can help to make 'learning to read easy' by offering learners written texts which acknowledge a need to be more explicit and fully structured than situationalised spoken language is required to be; by introducing the conventions of written language, especially the use of reference in written texts, with some care and remembering that, far from offering an initial route into reading, the representation of speaking (especially informal speaking) in writing is a particularly difficult convention to grasp. All learners have to come to terms with the special characteristics of written language, a difficulty compounded for those L2 learners who are in the process of acquiring areas of target language grammar such as interrogative and past tense forms. L2 learners in particular are helped by fully structured texts which make salient features of English syntax more 'visible' and therefore more readily commented on or queried. Such texts support and extend a developing linguistic competence and awareness, ultimately allowing L2 learners the opportunity to extend their own stylistic repertory, especially if most of their access to English has been in informal face-to-face situations.

Notes

1. A good life is one of a series of books written by as well as for people who have reading and writing difficulties.

Transcript 1: Tom's accident

Text:

> But Tom did not see him and ran into the road. A truck was coming. "Come back, Tom", cried Ann. Tom ran on. But he slipped and fell. The truck driver braked hard. The policeman stopped the traffic and ran to Tom. "That was a very silly thing to do" the policeman said.

	Amna	**CW**
1.	The policeman-policeman s-it ‡	STOPPED
2.	stopped stopped the ter-traffic	
3.	and rode to Tom	What did he do?
4.	and ran to Tom	
5.	T...‡ was a ver ‡-sill-s-lip ‡	THAT - VERY - SILLY
6.		You know what 'silly'
7.		means - stupid?
8.	*Yeh*	
9.	children - no - .T...	Well read the next
10.		bit. What's that?
11.	to ...d - d	D-O
12.	*I don't know*	DO
13.		So what fits in here?
14.		'That was a very
15.		silly --- to do'
16.	*I don't know*	If you do something silly,what
17.		does your sister say. 'That
18.		was a very silly --- to do.'
19.	*Girl*?	
20.		Not a very silly **girl** to do.
21.		'Now that was a very silly --
22.		THING

23.*thing*	'That was a very silly thing
24.	to do'
25.*thing miss. Miss this one thing?*	That word is 'thing' yes
26.*Oh. Thing means? This thing* (pointing to object in room)	
27.*this one **no** thing* (indicating text)	Well ... yeh.

Transcript 2: A woman on her own

Text:

> Women on their own cannot really have a life because of the world. When they do get a chance to go out, people think they are going out just for men. But they are not really going out for men. They get tired sitting in the house. They get very depressed and frightened. They want to go out for company.

	Amna	**CW**
1.	Women on their own ca...‡ cannot ‡	CANNOT REALLY
2.	really have a life because of the	
3.	wild ‡ world when their-them world'	WORLD 'because of the
4.		- Lets go back a bit. It says
5.		here: women can't have a
6.		good life because of the way
7.		the world is. When -
8.	them?	carry on: when ---
9.		do ...
10.	when --- do get a ‡ chance	CHANCE

11.*I don't know this one*	Its THEY
12.they	you know what 'they' means don't you? When they do get
13.	
14.	a chance …
15.*they means?*	You don't know what 'they'
16.	means? Who are they? Who
17.	are we talking about?
19.*child-life*	It says 'women on their own
20.	have a hard life' …
21.*her husband*?	
22.	…'when they do get a chance
23.	to go out people think they
24.	are going out just for men'
25.	they …
26.*they means 'people'?*	
27.	Not just people in general.
28.	Women, it means women.
29.	Women–women on their own
30.	with children. …So who are
31.	we talking about?
32.*She?*	
33.	**They** not **she.** It's **they**. It
34.	means **all** women.
35.*She telling **all** women?*	She's talking about all
36.	women, all women who live
37.	on their own.
38.*Yeh 'they' means 'nother woman*	
39.*'they' means this one* (she points	Yes we can say they are
40.outside to children in playground)	playing
41.*the children*	Yes the children or women or
42.	other people together. So
43.	she's talking about women
44.	on their own.

Transcript 3: Doing my flat up

Text:

I paint the ceiling You should see me

Amna	CW
1. I paint - I paint the	What's she painting? Look at
2.	the picture. What's this?
3.	CEILING
4. I paint the ceiling	
5. you ... said ... ‡	SHOULD
6.	you should
7. you should see me (repeats ' you should see me')	
8. *Who telling?*	Who's ?...?
9. *Who's she - no who's she telling*	
10.'your should' - *this is 'your'?*	You
11.'You should see me'	
12.*Then who see her*	Yes. Who's she talking to?
13.*yeh ...*	Well, she's talking to **you**
14.	the reader - I think. Do you
15.	think that's strange?
16.*Yeh, nobody here then who*	
17.*talk to her?*	That's right. Who's talking
18.	to her? She's the writer.
19.	She's writing the story for
20.	**you**. She's talking to **you**.

Transcript 4: Running Man

Text:

> On Sunday morning, Mrs Crooks shouts across the fence. "My Tom is proper peaky this morning. Dunno what they were doing at Nick Hardy's last night." "Funny", says Mum. "Harry looks a bit off colour, too." Harry thinks it will be a long time before he watches another ghost film on telly.

Sarla **CW**

1. On Sunday morning Mrs Crooks shouts
2. across the fence
3. My Tom is proper p... ‡ this morning — PEAKY - it means very ill
4. Dun... dun... ‡ what they were
5. doing at Nick Hardy's — DUNNO, another way of saying 'I don't know'
6. Funny, Harry looks a bit off colour too
7. Harry thinks it will be a long time
8. before he watch another ghost film on tele

Transcript 5: Maria's trip through the system

Text:

So they said, "Come back in three weeks' time when we know the results of the tests. Then we'll soon find you a job." She said she's still trying for the college. After, I went into hospital. I've been going to hospital ever since I was three months. I'm eighteen now. I've got Thalassaemia. Thalassaemia is - I've got too many white cells and not enough red cells in my blood.

	Yasmeen	**CW**
1.	So they said	
2.	Come back in three weeks' time	
3.	When we know the results of the tests	
4.	Then we will soon find you a job	
5.	She said she's still trying for the college	
6.	*What's 'trying'?*	Well, I think it means she's trying to get to college
7.		
8.	After, I went into hospital	
9.	I have been going to hospital	
10.	ver in since ‡ I was three months	EVER SINCE, so she's been going to hospital since she was three months old.
11.		
12.		
13.	I am eighteen now	
14.	I have good thalassaemia	Yes, 'thalassaemia', its a strange illness of the blood.
15.		
16.	I-VE got too many white cells	
17.	and not ... ‡	ENOUGH

18.*Enough - F or G?*	It isn't spelt like that, though.
19.*Oh dear!*	She's got too many white cells
20.	and not enough red cells in my
21.*blood*	...?

Notes on the transcription

‡	indicates an intervention from the teacher at this point
...	indicates a hesitation
-	indicates an immediate self-correction or repetition
Capitals	indicate that a word or phrase is provided by the teacher
Word italicised	indicates a student's response or comment
- - -	indicates that a word is omitted
Bold type	indicates emphasis

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Gatehouse, A woman on her own, by Margaret Fulcher
Centerprise, Doing my flat up, by Dalcy Edwards
Crown Street Kings, Running man part 2, by Ann Oates
Centerprise, Maria's trip through the system, by Maria Yianni
Ladybird, Red Riding Hood, adapted by Fran Hunia

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